IN DEFENSE OF WILLIAM JAMES
J. BOTTUM

The Weekly Standard

MARCH 30, 1998

THE ARROGANCE OF POWER

FRED BARNES
White House Poll Watchers

TUCKER CARLSON
Linda Tripp's Pentagon Papers

NOEMIE EMERY
The Four Swordsmen

MATTHEW REES
Nathan Landow, Frequent Flier

THE EDITORS
Lots of Lies

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the weekly Standard

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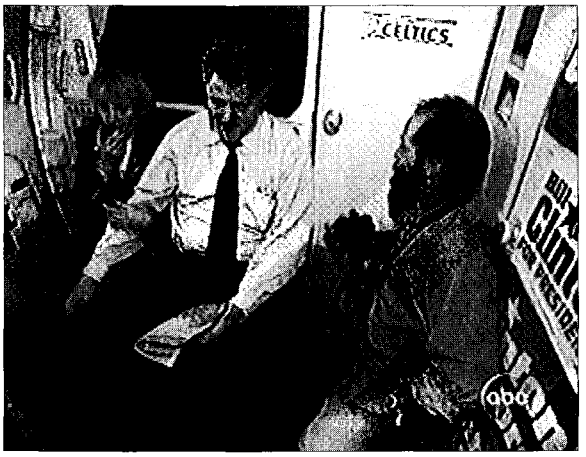
The Man from Grope



Sensitive to the needs of readers without access to the Internet, where this image has been widely disseminated of late, The Scrapbook here reproduces a frame of video shot by ABC News in November 1992. It doesn't mean anything—truly it doesn't. It's just a nice, touching picture. It shows then-presidential candidate Bill Clinton side by side on the jump seats with then-flight attendant Debra Schiff, aboard "Longhorn One," the official charter of the Clinton campaign.

What is the candidate doing exactly? Schiff has the microphone in one hand and in the next frame can be seen using her free hand to move the soon-to-be-presidential paw from her thigh.

The story has a happy ending. After Clinton's inauguration, Schiff moved on to become a well-liked receptionist in the West Wing of the White House, where she served the First Passenger for the next five years. Last week, she began a new job as assistant to the State Department protocol chief.

The Scrapbook apologizes for reproducing this embarrassing footage, but we wanted to assist the president's lawyer, Bob Bennett, in dispelling the "web of deceit and distortions" that has been unjustly spun regarding the president's behavior.

The Curse of '68

All those incumbent congressmen must be pretty smug this year. What with the economy humming along, and voters so docile that even the rake in the White House gets high approval ratings, what could possibly go wrong between now and November?

Lots. GOP strategists Mike Murphy and Alan Philp argue that incumbent senators, especially, should be running hard and avoiding complacency. They point to a curious pattern they dub "the Curse of '68," which recurs this year.

With six-year terms, only one-third of the 100 senators run for reelection in any election year. And the six-year cycle starting with the class of 1968 has been volatile. In 1974, 1980, 1986, and 1992, an unusual number of incumbents have been unseated. Thirty incumbents have lost their reelection bids in those elections—that's an average of six incumbents losing each time. By contrast, the average losses for the cycle starting with the class of 1970 are 3.8 seats; for the class of 1972, it's 3.4 losing incumbents on average.

Some of the most famous post-World War II names in American politics have been swept out of office by the Curse of '68: Herman Talmadge, a fixture in Georgia politics, lost to Republican Mack Mattingly in 1980; George McGovern was upset by South Dakota Republican James Abdnor that same year. Each of those winners would himself lose six years later.

Is this an example of astrology politics? Hardly. But it's one more reason for Carol Moseley-Braun, Barbara Boxer, Patty Murray, Kit Bond, Al D'Amato, and a couple of "safe" senators nobody's yet thought much about to look over their shoulders.

Pyramids of Denial

There is a clinical condition known as being "in denial." The term is often used loosely. Occasionally, though, the condition manifests itself in pure form. Witness the lead editorial from last Tuesday's *New York Times* on "presidential character":

"This is a peculiar moment," the editorialist intoned, "in what will surely be remembered as one of the oddest modern Presidencies. Part of what makes it peculiar is that we have so much information and yet still know so little about what kind of man Bill Clinton really is."

No, no, no, no, no, no, no (as the president himself

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Scrapbook

THE THIRD BENNETT BROTHER

once said in a different context). What makes it peculiar is that we know *so much* about what kind of man Bill Clinton really is. And wish we didn't.

Fish in a Barrel

Let's stipulate that every public figure who has been in Washington for the last decade has by now voiced at least five contradictory opinions on the subject of sexual harassment. And sure, picking out those contradictions in the age of Nexis is, in the idiot folk-saying of The Scrapbook's hometown, like shooting fish in a barrel. But, hey, if the bullets don't make all the water leak out of the barrel, the fish taste mighty fine. Or something.

So here's this week's fried fish stick—Sen. Al Gore, on the floor of the Senate in 1991, paying fulsome tribute to Professor Anita Hill:

"Luckily, the American workplace will never be the same. Men and women everywhere—in offices, in factories, in schools, in banks—are talking about sexual harassment; and hopefully this dialog will result in the end of sexual harassment in the workplace and more professional relationships between men and women who work together.

"I have been deeply moved by the stories of women who have written to me from Tennessee and from across the country, telling me about their own experiences with sexual harassment, believing their jobs to be threatened by refusing unwanted personal attention from professional colleagues." No word on how many of those stories were written from the neighboring state of Arkansas.

Sen. Gore went on to read into the *Congressional Record* a letter from 157 women attorneys in Los Angeles who noted: "It is not uncommon for cordial professional relationships to be maintained with those engaged in sexual harassment, sometimes because the behavior ceased or because individuals changed jobs, or because it was necessary or prudent to do so for legitimate career advancement reasons."

Gore has not been as vocal on the subject of Kathleen Willey. But then it is not uncommon for vice presidents to maintain cordial professional relationships with those they serve, for legitimate career- advancement reasons.

More Gore

The vice president carved time out of his busy schedule last week to call up the *Washington Post* and lodge what can only be described as a pre-Copernican complaint.

As the *Post* reported, Gore called executive editor Leonard Downie Jr. because "I thought about it and thought about it, and I decided I just had to call because you've printed a picture of the Earth upside down" on the front page.

"Well, nobody else has called," Downie responded, but thanks anyway. And Downie then thought to himself, after hanging up, What does he mean by "upside down"? Upside down to whom?

Truly, Al Gore gives new meaning to the term reactionary liberalism.

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In Praise of Sport Vehicles

In his article on sport-utility vehicles, Irwin M. Stelzer takes a couple of cheap shots at public transportation ("The Joy of Sport-Utility Vehicles," March 16).

Stelzer says, "When it turns out that you prefer your car to a planner's mass transit, the central authority responds by taxing your car and using taxpayer funds to subsidize its pet, mass transit." False. Our "central authority," the U.S. government, spends about $20 billion per year on highways and only $4 billion a year on mass transit—minus the cost of various unfunded mandates that the feds dump on transit providers (like the Americans with Disabilities Act and labor rules making it hard to lay off personnel).

Stelzer says the car means "personal mobility" and "an open society." Call me quaint, but I think that mobility means flexibility. Thus, I have more mobility where I can take the car or use public transit than in an autoutopia where I must drive or die.

Stelzer understandably sneers at environmentalists who attack the "freedom of the road." But both Stelzer and radical environmentalists have one thing in common: Both appear to agree that cars must either be our only way of getting around or be wiped off the face of the earth. Both are wrong. In Stelzer's own Washington and its suburbs, cars and public transportation coexist, and auto ownership is possible but not mandatory. Why can't we use those places as role models and have real mobility?

MICHAEL E. LEWYN
BUFFALO, NY

Irwin M. Stelzer pinpoints the deep-down motivation of those trying to regulate these vehicles out of existence: Sport-utes are simply too much fun—and something must be done about that!

Stelzer cogently argues that more lives would be saved by making small cars safer (by making them bigger and heavier) than by making big vehicles more dangerous (via downsizing). He fairly suggests that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's reticence on this critical point speaks volumes about whether safety remains the agency's top priority.

But if common sense argues that "bigger is safer," what does objective science show? Ironically, a 1997 NHTSA study, the "Relationship of Vehicle Weight to Fatality and Injury Risk," provides the answer: Adding 100 pounds to cars would have nearly eight times the lifesaving effect of removing 100 pounds from light trucks.

That's because the vast majority of highway fatalities (over 87 percent) occur in non-car/truck crashes. Single-vehicle crashes alone account for nearly half of all fatalities—and the unfortunate soul who collides with a tree, bridge abutment, or jersey wall is much safer in a large vehicle than in an econobox.

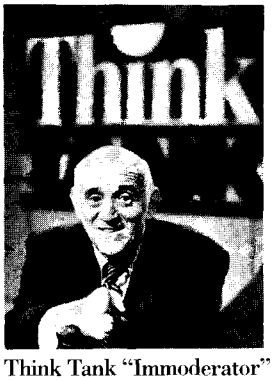
With light trucks now comprising nearly half of new-vehicle sales, it's right that we examine their impact on safety and the environment. Unfortunately, this "Main Street" issue has been ill-reported by much of the mainstream media.

DIANE K. STEED
COALITION FOR VEHICLE CHOICE
WASHINGTON, DC

I have just finished reading Irwin Stelzer's article on sport-utility vehicles, and though I do not particularly like mini-vans, I am forced to buy one because of government regulations. I have two children and one on the way. My 18-month-old is required to be in a car seat until age 5, the infant must be in a rear-facing seat, and my 9-year-old must wear his seat belt. None of them can ride in the front seat because of my mandated airbags, which could kill them if I had an accident. A regular passenger car cannot fit the whole family unless someone is unbelted or riding illegally.

I wish government bureaucrats would see the situations of real-life people, not just statistics, before they decide from their lofty perches what is best for us. The less they interfere with the consumer, the better. I think they often forget what makes this country great: It's us, not them.

DAWN LUSSIER
OXFORD, MA



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City Hall-Owned Utilities Plead—

"GIMME A BREAK"

Why should any City Hall, anywhere in America, own the means of production—or the means of distribution—when it comes to electricity?

Why are we having this once-in-a-generation debate—electricity rate restructuring—if all Washington can do is turn its back on fundamental questions? In the era of municipal service privatization, why are Mayors still running utility companies?

All over the world, countries are privatizing government-owned utilities. Yet here in America, City Hall bosses want to continue special privileges for politically controlled utility companies.

If Congress won't push City Hall out of the electric utility business, then Congress should at least end the craven tax subsidies given to municipal owned utilities. City Hall-owned utilities should be under the same tax and regulatory rules as investor-owned utilities. It's especially galling that City Hall-owned utilities can issue tax exempt bonds that the rest of us subsidize.

Now is the time to give ordinary American families a tax break, in part, by ending the federal subsidies for the City Hall bosses and bureaucrats who shouldn't be in the utility business in the first place. **Give us a break... Get City Hall out of the power business!**

CITIZENS FOR STATE POWER
122 South Patrick Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
csa@townhall.com

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Casual

Babes in Iceland

I confess that I'd heard the rumors about Iceland—a whispered account from a friend who once had a layover in Keflavík; a hushed conversation with a stranger in a smoky, dimly lit bar who had met Icelanders while traveling in Europe: The women of Iceland are the most preposterously beautiful girls in the world. Or so the stories go. But to me and to most of the men I know, that's all they were—stories. Rumors, myths, unverifiable accounts of some sort of blonde promised land.

Well, the Grail exists. I spent last week in Reykjavík, and, to paraphrase George Will, you can't swing a cat without hitting a woman who would give Lauren Bacall, or for that matter Helen of Troy, a run for her money. What's more, the people of Iceland are quite aware of their women's unearthly beauty.

The girls carry themselves with tremendous poise: They are flowing, stately, and jaunty all at once. They don't wear a smidgen of make-up, and they dress, almost always, as if the purpose were to frame a great work of art: On the coldest night ever recorded in Reykjavík, the girls all wore either strapless dresses or tight, black, stretch-twill boot-cut pants.

To Icelandic males, the beauty surplus is something of a matter of national pride. More than a few men I met were quick to point out their ladies' genetic superiority. "You like our girls, don't you?" asked one fellow I talked with in a bar. I admitted that I did. He gave me a tremendous grin, slapped me on the back, and crowed, "They are the most beautiful in the world—much more beautiful than American women even."

Now, I'm a patriot, and I don't normally let affronts to my national dignity slide, but I also know when I'm beat. So after a few days of gawking and leering, I decided to try to join the fun and bask in Icelandic loveliness.

As luck would have it, a friend of a friend of mine has a friend who lives in Reykjavík. And this friend thrice-removed, by further good fortune, is a girl named Ásta who is a contestant for the title of Miss Iceland. When I first met Ásta in a small restaurant for lunch, I nearly choked on my cod cheeks. She was wonderfully angular, tall and slender with shoulders at once elegant and strong. Her large, icy blue eyes flashed from under wisps of blonde hair, and I could tell that her mouth, held in a cordial smile when we were introduced, had a capacity, possessed by all devastatingly beautiful women, for the sinister, mocking sneer.

ASIDE FROM A BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH JODIE FOSTER, I'D NEVER BEEN IN THE PRESENCE OF THE TYPE OF BEAUTY OVER WHICH MEN WOULD GO TO WAR.

I was shocked when she invited me to tag along for the night with some of her friends, all of whom are in the running for Miss Iceland. I met the quintet in a hotel lobby and was whisked off to the Shadow-Bar, Iceland's most famous club, where another friend, Miss Reykjavík (I'm not kidding), was having a birthday party. Outside Shadow-Bar a long line of people were waiting to get in. I went to queue up, but Ásta took me by the arm and led me around to the side of the building, where she knocked four times on a door, which immediately opened. We stepped inside, and when I turned to the bouncer to ask how much the cover charge was, he waved me off, saying, "No charge for you and the ladies."

Walking through the club, I felt like a movie star. Both men and women gaped at us; crowds parted for us. As we sat enjoying a smoke and a drink, I caught people staring—and only then did I realize that everyday life is simply different for beautiful people, because we regular mortals place them on a higher plane.

Until that night, aside from a brief encounter with Jodie Foster, I'd never been in the presence of the type of beauty over which men would go to war. I would have expected to feel lust or desire, but instead I felt awe.

Later in the evening as I was talking with one of the ladies, Æta, I thought to myself, "I would marry this girl. Right here, tomorrow. I'll just call work on Monday, tell them I'm taking some more time off, and then she flies back to the States with me."

It was, of course, ridiculous. The point is that such extreme beauty is intoxicating because of what it represents. In the movie *Beautiful Girls,* Michael Rapaport says that a beautiful girl is "Promise. The Promise of a better day. The Promise of a greater hope. Promise of a new tomorrow." We covet beautiful girls not because they represent sex, but because, as Rapaport says, they are "hope, dancing in stiletto heels." And that is worth more than gold.

Jonathan V. Last

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the weekly Standard

CLINTON CORNERED

On Friday, March 13, Paula Jones's attorneys filed several hundred pages of sworn testimony and corroborating evidence with Judge Susan Webber Wright's U.S. District Court in Arkansas. There's a lot to be learned from these documents. First of all, there's the fact of Bill Clinton's animal grip on the female sexual imagination. According to Bill Clinton.

Paula Jones confided in two close friends immediately after Clinton exposed himself to her in Little Rock's Excelsior Hotel on May 8, 1991. Both those friends confirm her story under oath. One of them, Debra Lynn Ballentine, reports that Paula told her there was something peculiar about Clinton's genitals. Did she tell you anything else about his anatomy, Ballentine was asked in her October 1997 deposition? "She said he was really white and really overweight."

Peculiar. Pasty. Fat. But somehow, nevertheless, irresistible to the ladies. That's what Clinton's one-time friend and self-described mistress Dolly Kyle Browning, in another sworn deposition, says he told her during a 1987 conversation they had in Texas. "Women are everywhere," Browning testifies he told her. "I can't even walk down the street without someone literally trying to pick me up."

Could Clinton really believe this, the hoariest of all lecher's self-justifications: that *they want it*? He could. Browning and the president had a long conversation at their 1994 Hot Springs High School reunion. Clinton made extensive notes about this talk and kept them "in a briefcase that was always either under my desk in the White House or in my little private office." Clinton's notes say Browning was frustrated because he never had sex with her. In his sworn deposition, the president restates this point more forcefully. Browning has falsely claimed to have been his mistress, Clinton insists, to punish him for being an unattainable object of uncontrollable lust. "She was mad at me because I'd never been her lover."

In any case, Browning "had been through some very tough times in the last several years," and "she was very upset." Kathleen Willey, of course, was also "very upset" before the now-infamous West Wing encounter during which the president mashed her hand onto his privates. Though his lawyer initially announced that the president had no memory whatsoever of this meeting, Clinton now remembers Willey "very vividly"—because "she was so agitated." An Arkansas-era press aide to Clinton, one of the Jones lawsuit's "Jane Does," was agitated once, too. State trooper Larry Patterson swears that he dropped Clinton off at this woman's Little Rock house one evening, took measures to hide the governor's license plate, and then waited outside. A long time. When Clinton finally emerged, smeared with makeup at 4:30 in the morning, he told Patterson that his host "was really distraught . . . and I just had to stay. That's what took me so long. I had to comfort her."

So they're horny and hysterical, and he feels their pain. But before he does the feeling, he likes to have someone else do the feeling-out and facilitating. Kathleen Willey says that just before the 1992 presidential debate in Richmond, Clinton noticed her in a welcoming crowd of Democratic activists and asked then-Virginia lieutenant governor Don Beyer for her name and phone number. ABC videotape of this event shows Clinton doing just that. State trooper Danny Ferguson, co-defendant in the Jones lawsuit, acknowledges under oath that he delivered Paula to Clinton's private room after the governor told him she had "that come-hither look."

And two other members of Clinton's Arkansas gubernatorial security detail confirm the basic technique. Larry Patterson's deposition says that it was Clinton's common practice to ask his troopers, "Would you get me her name and her phone number? She has that come-hither look." The troopers would comply. That was "the procedure I used," Patterson reports, on at least "fifteen, twenty occasions." Trooper Roger Perry's deposition contains an account of one particularly telling incident. It was a 1989 or 1990 public appearance in Augusta, Arkansas. Clinton's eyes fell on an attractive young woman. He sent Perry to chat her up. Later on, Perry briefed the governor on his reconnaissance. Her name was Holly Cain. She was getting a divorce. And "you're going to like this," Governor. "She's wanting a state job." Clinton's response: "All right."

All right, indeed. Job offers figure prominently in the president's past adventures. Kathleen Willey sought and received more than one job assignment from the White House after the president "hugged"

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her. In February 1995, for instance, she sent Clinton a handwritten request for appointment to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. On that letter, routed to his aides, there is a notation from the president that reads: "Is this what Shelia Lawrence did? Can we do this for her?"

Gennifer Flowers, for her part, swears that, with Clinton's collusion, she secured a public post in Arkansas under false pretenses. Monica Lewinsky got a White House job and later offers from the United Nations and Revlon. Dolly Kyle Browning says Clinton urged her to move to Washington in 1994: "You can live on the Hill. I can help you find a job." Jane Doe #2 was appointed to the Arkansas Court of Appeals after Clinton's alleged affair with her. One woman named in court documents—not the "distraught" press aide, someone else—worked directly for Clinton while they were reportedly having a dalliance. One other woman's daddy got a Clinton nomination to the Arkansas state highway commission.

Next there is the matter of, well, fellatio. Under oath, Gennifer Flowers says oral sex was a common element of their relationship. Under oath, Larry Patterson says Clinton and Jane Doe #2 were once together in a car, but that you could see "only one head in the car, and that was Bill Clinton's, driving." Patterson says he also personally witnessed two similar episodes involving yet another woman, once in a Little Rock elementary-school playground and once in the traffic circle behind the governor's mansion. Trooper L.D. Brown, again under oath, has an equivalent tale to tell about a scene outside a Florida discotheque. Monica Lewinsky, most infamously, told Linda Tripp that oral sex was all she did with the president.

Confronted with potential disclosures like these, Bill Clinton seems to have an automatic instinct. He sends emissaries to hush the witnesses up. This effort often involves an offer of employment or something else of value. The president acknowledges talking to his troopers' former supervisor, Buddy Young (himself now a regional director of the Federal Emergency Management Administration), about their public statements. And Danny Ferguson says that Young then approached him—and offered the troopers federal jobs.

Dolly Kyle Browning swears that she got some free, unsolicited help from the president's lawyers at Washington's Skadden, Arps: a formal motion, prepared for her signature, asking Judge Wright to quash Browning's Paula Jones subpoena. An attorney named John B. Thompson declares, under penalty of perjury, that his law-school buddy, M. Samuel Jones, worked the bimbo patrol for the Clinton campaign during 1992. According to Thompson, Samuel Jones told him more than once that it was his job to "make them go away," these bimbos—a job that included paying the women for silence.

But the cover-up is not always so gentle. Dolly Kyle Browning says that her brother, working for the Clinton campaign in January 1992, called her on the phone and said, "If you cooperate with the media we will destroy you." Larry Patterson says Buddy Young, on four separate occasions, told him to "keep your mouth shut" if you "know what's best for you and your career and your family." Roger Perry says—"and I'm under oath here, and I swear on my mother's life"—that Young was even more brutal with him: If you talk, Young promised, "you will be destroyed, your reputation will be destroyed, and I represent the president of the United States." L.D. Brown says another Clinton crony, Skip Rutherford, once threatened him this way: "You don't want your credit card receipts all over the front page, do you?" Even Danny Ferguson admits to having warned Paula Jones about what would happen to her if she pursued her complaint against Clinton in public: "You better think about your family, because I've been through it, and they was starting to dig up dirt."

When all else fails, of course, Clinton simply asserts that his accusers are lying. All the women are lying, under oath. Linda Tripp and Kathleen Willey and Gennifer Flowers and Paula Jones and Dolly Kyle Browning and Debbie Ballentine are lying. Pamela Blackard, another Jones friend who confirms Paula's account of the Excelsior Hotel harassment, is lying. Lydia Cathey, Jones's sister, is lying. Judy Stokes, who testifies that former Miss America Elizabeth Ward once tearfully confided to her that she'd had sex with Clinton, is lying. They are all lying.

The men are lying, too. John B. Thompson is lying. All the troopers are lying. And any journalist who has reported what these witnesses have said is lying. There is a truly surreal moment in the president's deposition when he suggests, at great length, that Bill Rempel of the *Los Angeles Times* offered the troopers several hundred thousand dollars for their story. *Any* story. "They were encouraged to be as negative as possible," Clinton testifies, "they were told they didn't have to tell the truth, they were told all they had to do was to get two or more people to agree," and "there was a lot of money in it for them if they did it." Moreover, Clinton claims to believe that Rempel "threatened" the troopers about what would happen if they didn't cooperate with this *Los Angeles Times* conspiracy.

Yeah, right, Mr. President.

It's an infuriating thing to be told by the White House and its agents that several dozen people are perjuring themselves and that only Bill Clinton is telling the truth. It's an infuriating thing to watch media

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commentators—and timid congressional Republicans—pretend that the facts are still in some dispute, and that those facts will become a problem only "if and when" they are finally proved. And it is an infuriating thing that ordinary Americans continue to tell pollsters they approve of the pretender-in-chief.

But we can take some comfort in human nature. Clinton may appear serene on the outside. Inside, he must be going near berserk. Maintaining a lie of such scale and complexity is a task beyond normal human capacity. It is bound to fall apart. And so, therefore, is he.

At one point in the transcript of his January 17 deposition, Clinton is asked whether he has ever talked to Monica Lewinsky about her possible testimony in the Jones lawsuit. You can almost hear the gears grinding in his head as he tries to figure out the right answer. Clinton cannot say no, because he knows that any such denial will be thoroughly incredible. He knows there are records of White House meetings he's had with Lewinsky—meetings that post-date her subpoena from the Jones attorneys. How could they not have talked about it?

At the same time, though, Clinton cannot offer an uncomplicated acknowledgment that he *has* talked to Lewinsky about her potential testimony, because that might make it appear that he has tampered with a witness. Remember: At this point, January 17, only a handful of people know that the president's friends have just spent several weeks making unusual efforts to spirit Lewinsky out of town.

So Clinton pulls a Clinton. He fudges. He says he's "not sure" whether he has ever mentioned subpoenas and testimony to this young lady. And if he has mentioned such stuff to her, the mention was something merely offhand, speculative, jocular. Here's the president trying to thread this needle:

"Seems to me the last time she was there [at the White House] to see Betty before Christmas we were joking about how you-all [Paula's attorneys], with the help of the Rutherford Institute, were going to call every woman I'd ever talked to . . . and so I said you [Lewinsky] would qualify, or something like that. I don't, I don't think we ever had more of a conversation than that about it, because when I saw how long the witness list was, or I heard about it, before I saw, but actually by the time I saw it her name was on it, but I think that was after all this had happened. I might have said something like that, so I don't want to say for sure I didn't, because I might have said something like that."

Did you catch his mistake? It's a whopper. It comes when Clinton begins to talk about "how long the witness list was." Those words constitute an admission that he knew Lewinsky would be called for testimony *before* he raised the possibility with her directly—and, it would soon turn out, *before* people like Vernon Jordan began their most intensive job-placement activities on her behalf. The "witness list" reference, in short, is testimony, by the president, that he has recently been smack in the middle of what he knows will look to any objective observer like an obstruction of justice.

Reread Clinton's answer. He's no dope. As soon as the "witness list" business comes out of his mouth, Clinton realizes he's goofed and immediately tries to backtrack. That's what all the subsequent gobbledygook over chronology is about. He discussed Lewinsky's possible testimony with her only *before* he knew for sure she would be called. If he discussed it with her at all. He's "not sure."

Yeah, sure, Mr. President.

Conventional wisdom in Washington now has it that Clinton will ultimately get away with all this nonsense. We wouldn't be so sure. The man has already painted himself into an eensie-weensie corner. Sooner or later, we wager, one way or another, he *will* be cornered for good, and his dishonesty will stain him, indelibly, for all the world to see.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Living by the Polls

by Fred Barnes

"THIS WHOLE THING IS POLL DRIVEN," declares a leading defender of President Clinton. Indeed, following Kathleen Willey's gripping TV appearance on March 15, the mere possibility of a dip in the president's poll ratings gave Clinton and his advisers a bad case of the jitters. "There was apprehension," says press secretary Mike McCurry. "Everybody worried she'd appear to be credible." James Carville, anxious that Willey's accusation of sexual harassment by the president would affect the polls, called the White House on March 17 from Latin America, where he's working on a political campaign. He was relieved to hear from Clinton aides Paul Begala and Rahm Emanuel that the president's numbers had held, even gone up in one poll. McCurry

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breathed easier as he drove to work that morning after hearing a radio report of a fresh CBS survey. Clinton's job approval had risen to 67 percent from 64 percent two weeks earlier.

Never have polls measuring the public's judgment of a president's job performance and personal traits been more important. Why is this? Because polls "are driving every aspect of American politics at the national level," insists Democratic consultant (and sometime White House adviser) Bob Beckel. "If Clinton's poll numbers stay up, he rides right through. If they fall, it changes the equation for the congressional election in '98, the legislative agenda in '98, and the presidential election in 2000." For now at least, the president's strong poll numbers are restraining Republicans from launching a full-scale effort to discredit him, keeping Democrats from bolting, allowing Clinton to move ahead on issues like education and tobacco, and holding off challengers of Vice President Al Gore for the Democratic presidential nomination.

"If his poll numbers drop 15 points," says Carville, "then the Republicans would see there's a place to seize the offensive." McCurry says both Republicans and the press would go "thermonuclear." But since the impact of Willey's interview on *60 Minutes* was only to cause a slight tumble in Clinton's personal popularity, nothing like this happened. In a CNN survey, the president's favorable rating fell from 64 percent to 60 percent. In an ABC poll, it slipped from 56 percent to 50 percent. But these dips were offset by sky-high approval of the president's job performance (67 percent in CNN's poll, 63 percent in ABC's).

This acted as a brake on Republicans, causing them to fear a public backlash if they moved boldly against Clinton. So only a handful of Republicans spoke up. Sen. John Ashcroft of Missouri called Clinton a "sexual predator" in his encounter with Willey just outside the Oval Office in 1993. House GOP whip Tom DeLay, in a speech on the House floor, charged Clinton with breaking faith with the American people "time and time again." He said Clinton should come forward and explain his relationship with Willey and Monica Lewinsky. Meanwhile, House speaker Newt Gingrich and chairman Henry Hyde of the House Judiciary Committee announced they wouldn't move against Clinton unilaterally. They said any impeachment proceedings would wait until independent counsel Ken Starr sends Congress a report on his investigation of Clinton.

REPUBLICANS ARE UNWILLING TO ENGAGE CLINTON IN POLICY NEGOTIATIONS THAT WOULD ALLOW HIM TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT.

Post-Willey, few congressional Democrats rushed to Clinton's defense. They are reluctant to back Clinton out of fear they'll be embarrassed by new revelations. Even Sen. Bob Torricelli of New Jersey, normally a noisy Clinton supporter, was muted in defending Clinton again. What's more important to Clinton at this point, however, is that no Democrats are jumping ship. Should the president plummet in the polls, the expectation at the White House is that Democrats would begin peeling away. And it might not take much. Only a few Democrats on Capitol Hill have close ties to the president. Most blame him for the loss of Congress in 1994 and for siphoning off most of the campaign money in 1996 for his reelection drive.

The White House calculation is that the public wants the president to press his issues. There's a kind of mutual reinforcement at work: The polls not only indicate the public's desire for Clinton to stress substantive matters, they encourage him to keep on doing it. The public, says McCurry, "will never forgive Clinton if he allows himself to be mesmerized by this [scandal] thing. I think Clinton knows that and understands that."

There's a problem for Clinton, though, in trying to stick to his issues. After the Monica Lewinsky story broke in January, the president had a perfect vehicle for touting his agenda to the country. It was the State of the Union address. Viewed by millions on television, it was a "godsend," an adviser says. But there's no "natural setting in the next six or eight weeks" that would rivet national attention to Clinton's domestic plans. True, Clinton has trips to Africa and Latin America planned, but these probably won't provide distraction from the sex scandal. And Republicans are unwilling to play along by engaging Clinton in policy negotiations that would emphasize his involvement in serious presidential business.

In the end, the polls could come back to haunt Clinton. It's quite conceivable, for example, that the president's job-approval rating could drift down to where his favorability is now—the low 50s or high 40s. That's not especially high for a president, though normally not bad either. But Clinton's case is different. It would represent a decline of 15 points or more. The press and the political community would take notice, and Clinton would surely suffer. The old saying that if you live by the polls, you might die by them, could turn out to be true.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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WHO LOVES YA, NATE?

by Matthew Rees

March 21, 1997

Dear Gail and Peter,

I am sure you know how I must feel about the recent press that we have received. Although there were no implied suggestions of legal wrong-doing, the perception was pretty bad.

My deep concern lies with any embarrassment or difficulties these two issues might have caused you and the Vice President, and that bothers me more than anything else about it. . . . I have never believed in or admired and respected any political leader as I do Al. Nor have I ever worked with anyone of your level of integrity and intelligence. . . .

Again, my deepest and most sincere apologies. I hope I will get the opportunity to make it up to you both. You all are the greatest.

Love ya,
Nate

THE "NATE" IN THIS LETTER is Nathan Landow. He's the Maryland real-estate mogul and Democratic party fund-raiser who stands accused of trying to muzzle Kathleen Willey after *Newsweek* reported her claim of having been groped by Bill Clinton. The "Gail and Peter" are Peter Knight, the Clinton/Gore '96 campaign manager, and his wife. Landow sent the letter shortly after the press reported his efforts to shake down an Indian tribe looking for help in Washington, and to arrange a cozy real-estate deal for one-time Clinton crony Webster Hubbell. The purpose of the letter was to make amends with Knight, one of the most powerful people in the Clinton/Gore orbit. The letter is relevant to the Willey case in that it illustrates the lengths to which Landow will go to impress his favorite politicians.

Landow's involvement with Willey includes his chartering a plane last November to fly her to his estate on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Willey says that, during her two-day stay there, Landow urged her not to say anything about her encounter with Clinton. Landow's goal in undertaking such a mission would have been less to help Clinton—Landow and the president are said to care little for each other—than to ingratiate himself with Gore and Knight. A Washington investor who knows Landow believes Landow is capable of this: "It would not be atypical for Nate to insert himself into [the Willey affair] or for him to tell Willey things as if he were acting at the behest of the White House, when in fact he had no such authority."

Landow, 65, had made millions in real estate by the time he popped onto the political scene in 1976 to aid Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign. Two years later, with his friends in high places and his prodigious fund-raising for the Democrats, he had all but secured himself an ambassadorial appointment to the Netherlands. But then a *Washington Post* exposé linked him to a well-known underworld figure, Joe Nesline, with whom he was cooking up a real-estate deal. Landow claimed not to have known of Nesline's reputation and even traveled to the *Post*'s editorial headquarters to plead with the paper not to publish the story. But the evidence contained in the article was damning, and Landow never got his nomination.

When Carter lost in 1980, Landow immediately contacted Walter Mondale, to offer his services for 1984. According to press reports, Landow lent Mondale his private jet and raised over $2 million for the former vice president. Landow is also routinely identified as a major financial backer of Gore's presidential run in 1988, but a Gore associate recalls that "Nate had a reputation as a big promiser, a big talker, but as someone who couldn't deliver."

In 1989, Landow became chairman of Maryland's Democratic party. But according to the *Washington Post*, his "domineering style alienated large sectors of the state party." His adversaries included the Democratic governor, William Donald Schaefer, as well as national chairman Ron Brown. In July 1992, Landow abruptly resigned as party chairman and devoted himself to fund-raising for the Clinton/Gore ticket.

Landow's reputation as a Gore loyalist is well established, and it was underscored by materials turned over by Gore in connection with the White House fund-raising controversy. One document in Gore's handwriting showed that, when he called Landow in late 1995 to ask for a $25,000 donation, Landow replied, "You'll have it in hand in one hour." In a thank-you note, Gore wrote, "Thanks! One hour is a record!" Landow is thus the type every presidential aspirant wants to have on his side. But the Indian episode stands as a reminder of Landow's liabilities.

In 1996, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian tribes of Oklahoma had contributed $107,000 to the Democratic National Committee in hopes of winning back 7,500 acres of federally owned land. The donation got them a meeting with President Clinton in June 1996, and they emerged believing that he would support their efforts. When no action ensued, the Indians turned to a Washington-based Democratic operative, Mike Copperthite, who in turn took them to Landow.

After twice meeting in Washington with tribal representatives, Landow began talking to the tribes' attorney about fees. Landow had brought Knight into the negotiations and told the tribe that Knight could represent them for a $100,000 payment up front, followed by a $10,000-a-month retainer. Landow's cut in the

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deal was to be 10 percent of any settlement price for development of the land and 10 percent of any revenues earned from the land's oil and gas.

The tribal representatives found these figures excessive—the average annual income among Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians is about $6,000, and the DNC contribution had depleted their welfare fund—but they figured it was a worthwhile investment if it meant that their quest for the land would succeed (the land includes an estimated $500 million in oil and gas reserves). And with Landow repeatedly touting Knight's and his own close connections to the Clinton administration—he boasted of smoking Cuban cigars at the White House on inauguration night and being shooed outside by Hillary—the tribes assumed they'd have little trouble prevailing.

But when they met with Landow in February 1997, the deal turned sour. According to Sen. Fred Thompson's committee report on fund-raising abuses, tribe members had not yet passed a resolution approving the Landow/Knight arrangement, and the tribal chairman couldn't attend the meeting. When Landow was told of this, he began yelling profanities at the Indians, insisting that if they did not agree to his terms then and there, he would make sure they never got the land. "If you don't do this deal," he said, "I will f— you." (In a deposition given to Senate investigators, Landow acknowledged having "suggested" the terms of a contract, but denied making any threats.)

Intimidated, the tribe drafted a contract, and Landow later sent them a letter accompanied by a revised contract. The letter closed with, "I will do everything I can to help you and your Tribes successfully conclude your goals." But shortly thereafter, Landow got a call from Susan Schmidt of the *Washington Post* asking about his work with the Indians. Landow then phoned the tribal chairman, who says that Landow instructed him to tear up the proposed contracts. Landow also called Copperthite, telling him, according to Copperthite, "You know nothing about my contract with the tribes and nothing about Peter Knight's contract." Copperthite also says Landow told him to tell Schmidt that, while DNC officials may have suggested that contributions could help the tribe get its land back, Landow himself had done no such thing.

Copperthite and the Indians had, by this time, soured on Landow. Instead of tearing up the contracts, they made them available to the FBI and the Justice Department. The front-page *Post* article that spelled out the shakedown in great detail killed any work between Landow and the tribe. (Landow was so concerned he went to the *Post*'s printing plant the night

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before he thought the article was coming out, to pick up an early copy.) The day the article appeared, Landow called Copperthite and tried to set up a meeting the next morning. He told Copperthite he wanted the two of them to get their stories straight, and that once they'd weathered this storm, they would become "part of the happy Gore family." Copperthite says he understood this to mean that, if he played ball with Landow, he'd have a job in the Gore administration.

Landow denies any wrongdoing with regard to the Indians, just as he does the allegations that he tried to silence Willey. (When reporters have questioned him, he has shouted obscenities at them.) But by virtue of his ties to Gore and the fact that his daughter was a White House colleague of Willey's and is married to Michael Cardozo, the one-time head of Clinton's legal-defense fund, administration officials have had to answer questions about Landow. And they've done their best to make clear that he's no insider.

When Mike McCurry, Clinton's spokesman, was asked on March 17 about the president's relationship with Landow, his initial reply was, "I can't answer that." Later, he said Landow "is one of many Democratic-party financial contributors. He's a former state-party chairman. He's well known to many in the party." Similarly, Gore's office is distributing a terse one-sentence statement: "Mr. Landow is a longtime supporter and friend of the Vice President, as well as other Democrats." These noncommittal words send an unmistakable signal: Landow has worn out his welcome at the White House.

So, the Willey controversy has turned Nathan Landow—who desperately wants to be an insider—into an outcast. But if last year's letter to Peter Knight is any guide, don't expect Landow to go gentle into his White House exile. "During the last ten years," Landow wrote,

I have made every effort to be supportive without causing any heartache. It looks like I didn't quite make it through the eleventh. But, I hope that during the next four, you and Al will find a way for me to continue on the path of my obvious goals for you both.

Will Knight and Gore indeed "find a way" for Landow? He shouldn't wait up nights.

***Matthew Rees is a staff writer for* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.**

SCOUTS' HONOR

by Larry P. Arnn

NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME, the Boy Scouts of America are under siege. In Orange County, California—bastion of robust conservatism—the local Scout council is dealing with the case of the Randall twins. Their father, a lawyer, has reared them atheist, which traditionally is a problem in scouting. At a 1990 Cub Scout meeting, the boys refused to make the Scout promise, which goes as follows: "On my honor I will do my best; To do my duty to God and country and to obey the Scout Law; To help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

After the boys were told that the promise is mandatory for Scouts, the ACLU swooped in, with its refined techniques of subversive argument and shrewd judge-shopping. It found a magistrate willing to say that the oath violated the rights of the twins, as non-believers. How dare the Scouts require a promise to do duty to God (even if it is precisely the purpose of scouting to teach that duty)? The case is now before the California Supreme Court, and a ruling is due not later than April 6. Still, the local judge ordered the Orange County Scout council to grant a "board of review" before that deadline, to test the boys for Eagle Scout (the highest award a Scout can earn). On March 15, the board met and, acting under the judge's decree that the Randalls not be asked about their religious beliefs, was compelled to recommend approval to the Scouts' national council.

One feels for the Randall twins. But we should think too of the parties who are most deeply concerned—the millions of Scouts who subscribe to the principles of scouting, and the volunteer leaders who make it possible. Ed Laird, chairman of the Orange County Scouts, runs a small business and gives freely of his limited time and money to scouting. He himself took an oath to uphold the purposes of scouting. It offended his conscience to convene a board of review for the Randalls, without reference to God, and he had great difficulty finding people to sit on the board. Yet lawyers told him that, if he didn't make it happen, he could go to jail.

There is other bad news elsewhere. On March 2, a New Jersey appellate court ruled that the Scouts' organization is a "public accommodation" within the meaning of the New Jersey Civil Rights statute. For that reason, the Scouts are required to readmit as a scoutmaster one James Dale, a former Scout who became co-chairman of a homosexual organization

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while at Rutgers University. When local Scout officials read of Dale's self-outing, they expelled him as a Scout leader. If Dale is sustained later in the New Jersey Supreme Court, then only the good judgment of nine Supreme Court justices will stand between the ACLU and the death of scouting as it has been practiced for almost a century.

The Boy Scouts are a private organization—old, respected, devoted to the service of others. A general belief in God, as the source of right and the Being to whom we owe ultimate allegiance, is at the heart of the endeavor. The Scouts' view of sex is also central—it is the moral teaching that sex is meant to be a part of family life. Now, upon pain of imprisonment, people are being forced to abandon these doctrines. This is a type of despotism, and something must be done.

On the legal front, the law of "public accommodation" requires fundamental reform. It is proper that the law forbids a theater or a restaurant to refuse anyone on grounds of race. As John Eastman has written, the common law has held for centuries—and Blackstone himself acknowledges—that it is either a civil injury or a crime to deny public accommodation to an individual without good reason. If a state fails to prevent that injury, then it denies equal protection under the law. The Fourteenth Amendment forbids this and prescribes remedies to stop it.

But what is a public accommodation, and what constitutes good reason for refusing service? The Boy Scouts do not hang a sign on their door saying that all may enter. As the name implies, they are first looking for boys, and the separate education of boys and girls is an old, common, and reasonable practice. More specifically, the Scouts are looking for boys who will promise to follow the creed that makes scouting what it is. If a boy will not make that promise, then the Scouts cannot help him. In his own interest—and in that of other boys who do wish to make the pledge—he must be excluded. If we subvert that position, we destroy scouting. The Scouts' freedom to be who they are and to perform their good work deserves to be protected.

Then, there is the political front, ultimately the most important. In resisting the influence of judges, we would be hampered by a doctrine—invented by liberals—that the Supreme Court is the solitary voice on the Constitution and that whatever the Court says about it is final. But that doctrine is wrong. Congress, the president, and the people have a say, too.

And here is what they should say: It is the rights of the Boy Scouts—not of the Randall kids or of James Dale—that are being violated. Each of us has, under the Constitution, the right to associate with whom we please. And the Scouts pursue that right for a high moral and charitable purpose. The Supreme Court itself has said that the right to associate means necessarily the right not to associate, as well. If that right can't be protected here, it is jeopardized everywhere. Indeed, churches themselves could be next. We need not wait for courts to vindicate sacred and constitutional rights. When a state court (or a federal one) fails to protect the rights of its citizens in so essential a mat-

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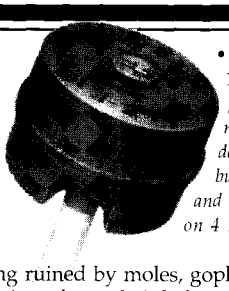

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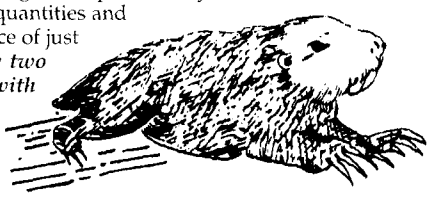

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ter, the Fourteenth Amendment empowers Congress to require better policy.

So let Congress act. After all, the president signed the Defense of Marriage Act, and maybe he will sign a Defense of the Boy Scouts Act, too. If not, we will have a grand political battle about what the Constitution means, and what our country means. Rep. Charles Canady of Florida is drafting a Scout-protection bill right now. The Boy Scouts need it—and so, really, do we all.

Larry P. Arnn is president of the Claremont Institute.

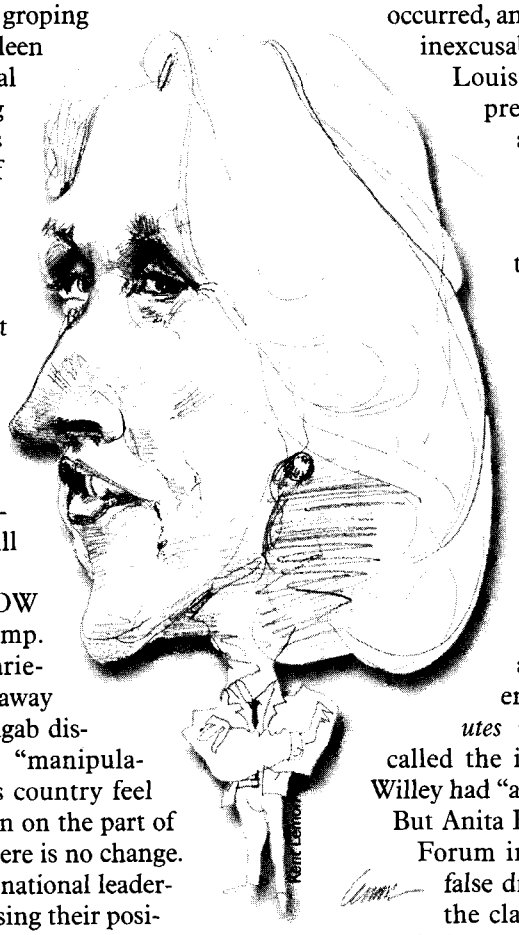
THE FEMINISTS SQUIRM

by Pia Nordlinger

WEEK AFTER SCANDALOUS WEEK, feminists remained conspicuously silent about the allegations of sexual misconduct facing President Clinton. Then, on March 15, National Organization for Women president Patricia Ireland spoke—in a peep masquerading as a roar. On CNN's *Late Edition*, Ireland said of Clinton's alleged groping of White House volunteer Kathleen Willey: "If true, it's sexual assault. . . . Now we're talking about, really, sexual predators and people who in positions of power use that power to take advantage of women."

Ireland sounded fierce, yet her remarks were less a turning point for NOW than a statement of the obvious: *If* the allegations are true, *then* Clinton is a barbarian. Elsewhere, a few liberal congresswomen voiced cautious doubts about the president's character, but hardcore Clinton loyalists were still waiting for "the facts."

Despite appearances, NOW itself remains in the latter camp. One who confirms this is Marie-José Ragab, president of a breakaway NOW chapter in Dulles, Va. Ragab dismisses Ireland's statement as "manipulation." "It made women in this country feel that there is a change in position on the part of the organization," she says. "There is no change. [Ireland] was trotted out by the national leadership, who are now terrified of losing their position of power."



Patricia Ireland

It was Ragab who instigated her chapter's break with the national organization in mid-February, after NOW leaders failed to speak up about the scandal. "We were caught between the critical silence on the part of our leadership," she explains, "and the fact that we are supposed to go around in our community fighting sexual harassment." The Dulles group called on the national leadership to resign. According to Ragab, NOW is rife with "hypocrisy and double standards."

Ireland is not the only Clintonista whose public statements have appeared to represent a shift. "If what Mrs. Willey claims is true, sexual harassment occurred, and sexual harassment at any level is inexcusable," said Sen. Mary Landrieu of Louisiana last week. Kate Michelman, president of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, adopted the tone of a disappointed parent: "As a woman and a woman leader, this type of story is troublesome—it's very disturbing and sad."

The problem with all these expressions of concern is that they come so late. Where were the feminists on Paula Jones? Kathleen Willey's story has carried weight because she claims (like Jones, but unlike Monica Lewinsky and Gennifer Flowers) that Clinton's advances were unwanted; because she is a longtime supporter of the president and his party; and because her emotional performance on *60 Minutes* struck a chord. Ireland herself called the interview "compelling" and said Willey had "a great deal of credibility."

But Anita Blair of the Independent Women's Forum insists that feminists are drawing false distinctions. "We ought to evaluate the claims of a Gennifer Flowers and a Paula Jones on the same basis as we evaluate the claims of a Kathleen Willey, without reference to what finishing school they went to."

Some feminists are willing to concede that the sex-

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ual-harassment issue is now in play, but others are still lying low. According to Anita Perez Ferguson, president of the National Women's Political Caucus, feminists cannot criticize the president's alleged behavior because, unlike the case of Clarence Thomas, Clinton is a defendant in private litigation. "This is grand-jury testimony with a gag rule on it—a very different scenario," notes Ferguson. "If and when the time comes for the Congress to take this up after a judge has made a final judgment, then certainly the NWPC and other groups will be there."

Judith Lichtman, president of the Women's Legal Defense Fund, is waiting as well. As she told the *Washington Post*, "I'm too good a lawyer to step into the middle of an investigation." Likewise, Sen. Dianne Feinstein released a statement saying, "I am not in a position to know the facts . . . and am not going to make a judgment until I do." Bluntest of all, Geraldine Ferraro told the *New York Times*, "I can't assess what's real and what's not real. And I don't want to."

Liberals wanted to know the truth when Clarence Thomas was being grilled. And they were willing enough to draw conclusions about what was real when Bob Packwood was accused of making passes at women on his staff. "Feminists have given some lip service to the idea of learning all the facts in this case because it suits them," says Blair. "They did not wait to hear all the facts for the Republican men that they've marched against in the past."

Perhaps the greatest inconsistency is in the comments of Ann Lewis, White House communications director. In 1991, Lewis said she understood how Anita Hill could continue to work for Clarence Thomas after he allegedly harassed her. "You don't know what it's like to be a young working woman," Lewis said, "to have this really presitigious and powerful boss, you think you have to stay on the right side of him or for the rest of your working life he could nix another job." But when Willey described how she continued to work for the president after the encounter, Lewis was less understanding: "It is such a contradiction. What I heard her say last night about how she felt, using words like feeling 'pressured,' like feeling that she had—that their friendship had been taken advantage of, simply is contradicted by the person I met with, who in 1996 was so positive about the president."

There are contradictions here, all right. Increasingly, Clinton's defenders are poised for a fall. In the wake of the Willey interview, female leaders are trying to position themselves to save face—not yet actually jumping ship, but none too subtly eyeing the escape hatches.

Pia Nordlinger is a reporter for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

THE COMING GOP LANDSLIDE

by Dick Morris

IT HAPPENED TO WOODROW WILSON IN 1918, to FDR in 1936, to Harry Truman in 1950, to Dwight Eisenhower in 1958, to Lyndon Johnson in 1966, to Nixon-Ford in 1974, and to Ronald Reagan in 1986. It will surely happen to Bill Clinton in 1998: the sixth-year rejection of the party that controls the White House.

Popularity is no antidote. Roosevelt, Eisenhower, and Reagan were extremely popular when the sixth-year jinx hit. Just as Clinton will be when it hits him. Why the jinx? Most presidents run out of steam by their sixth year in office. Their very success earlier in their administration strips them of an agenda. They must dine on a meal of leftovers and recycled proposals. The big stuff is already law.

In 1986, Reagan faced this vacuum. He had already checked spending, cut taxes, reformed the tax code, rearmed America, defeated communism, and led a national swing to the right. He had no more worlds to conquer. His agenda as he entered the '86 race included warmed-over proposals to restrict abortion, allow school prayer, and amend the Constitution to make his deficits illegal. America knew he didn't have much left to do. So it turned against the GOP, and Republicans lost the Senate.

Clinton has already done all the important things he wanted to do. His second term was over six months after it began. He balanced the budget, cut taxes, reformed welfare, controlled guns, cut crime, expanded family leave, handled the crisis in Bosnia, kept communism at bay in Russia, put a pro-choice majority on the court, and is even becoming successful at expanding the coverage of health insurance. In this session, he is likely to win much of his child-care package and anti-tobacco program. What is left for him to do? Lose seats in Congress.

Off-year turnout is always about 10 points lower than for presidential elections. The economically downscale vote drops off disproportionately, and most of that vote is Democratic. The Clinton debacle of

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1994 and the comeback of 1996 were, in part, due to these natural fluctuations in turnout. Turnout will drop again in 1998, all the more because there is no looming threat to bring Democrats out to vote.

Unwisely, Clinton seems determined to emphasize that there is nothing to do by planning to spend about one-third of the days between now and the election either abroad or on vacation. His tours of Africa, South America, China, Southeast Asia, Russia, and Western Europe may emphasize his "presidentiality," as his advisers intend, but they will also make the absence of any domestic agenda all too plain.

Then there are the scandals. While Clinton's job rating remains high, the public ennui with scandal, which protects the president from impeachment, will likely lead to a sense of the need for change in the '98 elections. The temptation to vote for nice clean Republicans is likely to be significant to a nation that has tired of hearing about oral sex.

What can the GOP do? It can start by nominating candidates who can be elected. The Illinois primary victory of right-winger Peter Fitzgerald over moderate Loleta Didrickson reminds one of Al Salvi's upset of moderate lieutenant governor Bob Kustra in the GOP primary of 1996. The nation does not want right-wingers or left-wingers, it wants moderates.

The GOP can also get out of the way. By waging a negative campaign against Clinton over sex issues, it will force voters who don't want such topics discussed in public (a group I call the silent plurality) to rally behind the president. If the Republicans run moderates and keep their mouths reasonably shut, they will win big in 1998—a filibuster-proof Senate majority and a working House majority.

Now for the bad news. (Good news for me.) Al Gore will win handily in 2000. Voters want split government. They understand the need for the two parties to check and balance each other. Having seen the GOP try to slash Medicaid and the Democrats try to raise taxes, they understand that competition improves and disciplines politicians.

The public has also learned to distinguish the Neolithic, monolithic House and Senate Democrats from the White House Clinton-Gore wing of the party. As much as they reject the Luddites, they embrace the moderates—of both parties. So: A GOP landslide in 1998 (as in 1994), followed by a Democratic presidential victory in 2000 (as in 1996). Sometimes history does repeat itself.

Dick Morris, a political strategist and columnist, was President Clinton's chief political adviser in 1995 and '96.

The "Hate Crime" Craze

by Michael Fumento

News item: A Hispanic civil rights group wants Taco Bell to quit running commercials that feature a pointy-eared, pint-sized, Spanish-speaking Chihuahua named Dinky. The fast-food chain uses the dog to hype its products with the signature phrase "Yo quiero Taco Bell," which means "I want Taco Bell." Claims Gabriel Cazares, a former mayor of Clearwater who is of Mexican descent, this ad "is very demeaning. It is definitely a hate crime that leads to the type of immigrant bashing that Hispanics are now up against."

It's easy to see that the term "hate crime" has become meaningless when it is broad enough to encompass a dog speaking Spanish. But that hasn't stopped the hand-wringing in Washington. In November, in language worthy of a flower child from the sixties, President Clinton declared, "All Americans deserve protection from hate." You could practically hear the lyrics "This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius . . ." in the background as he told a crowd, "We have to do more to combat [hate crimes] by removing the poison that breeds them from all our hearts."

The president is not satisfied with the hate-crime statutes already on the books in most states and the federal law, passed in 1994, that adds up to 10 years to the sentence of anyone convicted of a crime motivated by hate based on race, color, religion, or national origin. Now he wants to add language covering hate based on sexual preference, gender, or disability. Legislators have introduced their own slew of bills in both houses, making it clear there will be no toleration of the intolerant.

The underlying sentiment is hard to argue with. Obviously no one should be advocating hate. Nevertheless, all of us should worry about the proliferation of laws against hate crimes, for such laws, unable to protect people from anything as amorphous as a feeling, end up instead targeting speech and other peaceful activities deemed to be hateful.

No one questions that hate crimes exist. At one time, in some places, beating up or lynching a black man not only didn't get you jail time, it practically got you a medal. But the way to right such wrongs is to see

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that protections on the books are enforced for *all* groups. Any assault on a person or his property should be treated the same as every other assault, regardless of the victim's sex, sexual preference, skin color, religion, and so on. A punch is a punch; a broken window a broken window.

Motive is a factor in the definition of some crimes and in the determination of guilt or innocence, and judges have always had leeway to consider it in determining severity of sentence. But for the law to single out groups for special protection across the board is really just the flip side of the vile practice of singling out groups for special neglect.

The rationales for hate-crime laws are thin as onion skins. Michael Lieberman, Washington, D.C., coordinator of the Anti-Defamation League, compares special protections for minorities to those for police officers. But there is a good reason for treating an assault on a cop as a graver affront to society than an assault on a non-cop: Nothing threatens society more than attacks on those whose special role is to defend it. Police are the exception because their function is unique. Generally speaking, every crime should be treated as an affront to society, regardless of the identity of the victim.

Attorney General Janet Reno defends laws against hate crimes with the claim that these offenses "tear us apart when we should be moving closer together." But in fact, what tears us apart is the provision of special protection to certain groups, which encourages us to see ourselves not as equal members of society but as a splintered nation of minorities.

Despite the damage they do, hate-crime laws are all the rage because they allow Congress and the president to posture and pander to special-interest groups without appropriating funds. So it was when Congress unanimously passed legislation federalizing church arson in response to the Great Black Church-burning Epidemic of '96. This pleased civil-rights activists, who blamed the spate of burnings on "a well-organized white-supremacist movement" and "domestic terrorism." Yet as the Church Arson Task Force later reported, fires at black churches actually multiplied only after the publicity began, sparking copycat fires. White supremacists were linked to just two of the 136 burnings, while blacks were responsible for a disproportionate number.

Such cheap thrills for politicians, however, come at a serious price, for what hate-crime legislation singles out even more than particular groups is a particular activity, namely speech. Speech in some form is almost always required for a conviction.

Consider two thugs who both detest homosexuals. Thug One punches a homosexual and shouts a slur. Thug Two cracks a bat over a homosexual's head but remains silent. The proposed federal hate-crime laws would put Thug One in the Big House for up to 10 years (the average convicted murderer serves 8.5 years), while Thug Two, by virtue of having the foresight to keep his mouth shut, would have violated no federal law, simple assault being even now a mere state offense. Similarly, an anti-Semite who breaks every window in a synagogue is, without further evidence, a vandal. But if he paints even a small swastika on the synagogue door, he's a hate criminal subject to hate-crime laws and that potential 10-year federal penalty.

According to 1995 FBI data, over half of all hate crimes against persons fell into the category of "intimidation," which usually amounts to pure speech. But whether speech is prosecuted under hate-crime legislation depends on who the speaker is and what he says.

Thus, late last year a 15-year-old on a losing football team vented his frustration by scribbling a racial epithet in his opponents' locker room. His father claims the boy is no racist; merely a sore loser. In any case, playing football is a privilege, not a right, and dropping the boy from the team would have been perfectly legitimate. So would a good spanking. But the young man is facing criminal charges.

By contrast, no one would have dreamed of prosecuting a hate crime when Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan called Judaism a "gutter religion" or when the Rev. Jesse Jackson called New York City "Hymietown," likened California governor Pete Wilson to Susan Smith, compared the Christian Coalition to the Third Reich, and said Justice Clarence Thomas was "a colored lawn jockey for conservative white interests."

The problem here is a crime with a definition so wide a blue whale could swim through it. Consider that within days of Clinton's White House hate-crime talk in November, Jackson said of Bill Lann Lee's nomination to head the Justice Department's civil rights division, "To reject Bill is a hate crime."

Where, in all this, is the First Amendment? That guarantee of our freedom of speech wasn't drafted to protect expressions like "Have a nice day!" Rather, its purpose was to protect speech some people don't want to hear and believe others shouldn't hear. Most Americans understand the arrangement: I get to express my thoughts whether other people like them or not, and so do you. For those who are uncomfortable with this tradeoff, there is a place where nasty speech and even thought is regulated beyond our wildest dreams—but they'll need to take their coats. It gets mighty cold this time of year in North Korea.

***Michael Fumento, an attorney formerly with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, is the author of* The Fat of the Land: The Obesity Epidemic and How Overweight Americans Can Help Themselves.**

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Linda Tripp's Pentagon Papers

By Tucker Carlson

Last week, the *New Yorker* informed its readers of at least two previously undisclosed facts about Linda Tripp. First, in the spring of 1969, Tripp, then 19, was arrested in the town of Greenwood Lake, New York, on charges of grand larceny. Second, in 1987, on a federal security-clearance form she filled out for her job at the Pentagon, Tripp answered no to a question asking whether she had ever been arrested.

The *New Yorker* story appeared just as Kathleen Willey was making headlines, and immediately was held up by Clinton defenders as more evidence that the president's accusers have credibility problems. Linda Tripp's security-clearance form contains a "contradiction of the truth," Secretary of Defense William Cohen told CNN a day before the *New Yorker* even arrived on newsstands. "I'm sure it will be looked into. It's a serious matter." An editorial in *USA Today* the next morning found the news equally serious. "[T]his crew isn't made up of angels," the paper said, referring to the various women in the Lewinsky saga. Linda Tripp, the editorial noted, "is accused of failing to disclose a 1969 arrest on a security clearance form."

For a moment, it seemed possible that Linda Tripp would face felony charges for making a false statement. Then, within a day, an explanation emerged. The *Washington Post* reported that Tripp's larceny charge, which was part of a teenage prank, was reduced by the judge to one count of loitering, a sub-misdemeanor offense considered so insignificant in New York state that it is not entered into a person's permanent record. Tripp had not been aware that her 29-year-old arrest even counted as an arrest, her lawyer explained, so she did not acknowledge it when asked.

Tripp's explanation is one that those who handle security clearances have heard many times before. "It happens all the time," says the recently retired head of security for a large federal agency. When an employee is found to have lied about a minor scrape with the law that took place before entering government service, he says, "nobody does anything about it except make a note and put it in the employee's file." It is rare, in other words, for a cabinet secretary to talk about the incident on television.

But that's not the only unusual thing about the recent flap over Linda Tripp's arrest record. The federal government is famously reluctant to give reporters confidential information about its employees. How did Jane Mayer, who wrote the Linda Tripp story for the *New Yorker*, get access to information in Tripp's personnel file? Simple, says Pentagon spokesman Cliff Bernath: She asked for it. "She called in Thursday, and we responded Friday afternoon," explains Bernath, who gave Mayer the information over the phone. Bernath, who happens to be one of Tripp's supervisors, doesn't sound embarrassed as he explains how he turned over private information about his employee. "It would have been releasable under the Freedom of Information Act," Bernath says. "We felt very strongly that when information is releasable we shouldn't jerk around reporters or anybody else. We try to be forward-leaning. This is information that, again, was releasable."

Speaking on Monday, the day the *New Yorker* hits the newsstand, Bernath comes off as straightforward enough, but his nothing-to-hide tone seems strangely out of character for the Defense Department. "It's very, very odd that they were willing to provide that information on someone who works at the Pentagon, and that they provided it so quickly," says Greg Caires, a reporter who covers the military for *Defense Daily*. According to Caires, the Pentagon is so security conscious that it is often impossible for journalists to get the personnel records of military employees who have been dead for 30 years. "Listen," he says, "it took me two years just to get a permanent pass to get into the Pentagon. Believe me, it's very odd."

And it's even odder considering that the document that contained Tripp's arrest declaration—Form 398, a "personal history" statement used to conduct security clearances—is not "releasable." It is, in fact, among the most invasive, detailed, and embarrassingly personal questionnaires produced by the federal government. On what grounds did Bernath give such information to the *New Yorker*? "There is a United States

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Code on what's releasable," Bernath explains, though he admits, "I'm not sure I can put my hands on it right now." Instead, Bernath appeals to common sense: "It comes down to a subjective thing. In this case, the subjective thing was, 'Well, this is decent information. Here's a person who hasn't done anything.' It seemed like good news." Had Tripp indicated on her security-clearance form that she had been arrested, Bernath says, "then we definitely wouldn't have released that." But under those rules, is there a difference between releasing or refusing to release a potentially damaging fact? Wouldn't a reporter discover the answer either way? Look, says Bernath, it's not like the Pentagon gave out real information about Linda Tripp. "We released an 'X' in a box."

But wasn't the "X" on Tripp's form enough to cause her a fair amount of trouble and a good deal of bad publicity? Bernath sounds frustrated. "We try to be responsive to media," he says. "Had you called up and asked for that information, your request would have been treated the same way."

Fair enough. How about Secretary of Defense Cohen? Has he ever admitted being arrested? What about Ken Bacon, the Defense Department spokesman? What do his security-clearance forms say? Bernath promises to get back in touch in a day or two with the information.

He never called. According to those familiar with the Privacy Act of 1974, Bernath's silence is understandable. "It's totally inappropriate to release that kind of information, and everyone who works with that kind of information in government knows it," says a former high-level employee at the Defense Department's general counsel's office. Richard L. Huff, the co-director of the Office of Information and Privacy at the Justice Department, agrees. "Assuming that it had not been publicly disclosed before, I don't understand how that information could be properly disclosed," he says. "We would not do that at the Department of Justice. It would be a violation of the Privacy Act." What happened to Linda Tripp, says Washington attorney Joe diGenova, "is against the law."

DiGenova should know. Until late 1995, he was the independent counsel appointed to prosecute violators of the Privacy Act in the Bush administration passport investigation. For three years, diGenova investigated whether officials at the White House had used information from State Department archives in 1992 to confirm damaging rumors about then-candidate Bill Clinton. DiGenova ultimately concluded that no crimes had been committed. But after hundreds of news stories and millions of dollars in legal bills on all sides, just about everybody in the federal government got the point: Beware of using—or even appearing to use—confidential personal information contained in government files for partisan political advantage. Beware of releasing such information for any reason at all.

Cliff Bernath, who has worked in public affairs at the Defense Department since before the passport

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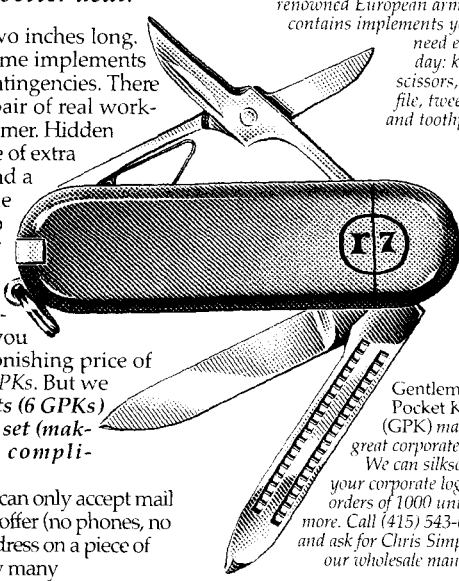

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affair, certainly should have known how inappropriate it was to give such information to the *New Yorker*. ("It's a very serious charge," Bernath told the *New York Times* when the story appeared, apparently without mentioning his own role in its development. "We've just learned about this matter, and it will be turned over to the investigative services. They will deal with it in their channels.") So why did Bernath cooperate with Jane Mayer?

Sinister scenarios bubbled up almost immediately. A day after the *New Yorker* story came out, former Clinton adviser Dick Morris wrote a column for the *New York Post* suggesting a conspiracy: "It was probably White House secret police operatives who visited courthouses to unearth records of Tripp's arrest (later expunged) on burglary charges when she was 19," Morris wrote, "and then ransacked Pentagon personnel files to show that Tripp had denied ever being arrested."

Not surprisingly, Morris's column caught the attention of Republicans on the Hill. Within hours Reps. John Mica and Jerry Solomon were preparing to send letters of inquiry to Cohen and Clinton. "We are concerned, obviously, that the White House had a hand in this, much like the FBI files," says Jeff Shea, an investigator for the Civil Service Subcommittee, which Mica chairs. In a letter to Bill Cohen, Solomon asked the defense secretary to "advise whether a criminal investigation has been initiated into the unauthorized disclosure of Ms. Tripp's official files." Cohen has not yet responded officially, but his comments on the subject have changed quite a bit since his CNN appearance. "The records are supposed to be protected by the privacy rules," he now says.

White House officials have denied any involvement in the Tripp story. It is still not clear, however, where Cliff Bernath found Linda Tripp's security-clearance form, which apparently was not stored at the Pentagon. If it turns out that the White House was the point of origin for Linda Tripp's file, there will be yet another scandal in Washington. Either way, Tripp probably has grounds for a successful civil suit against the Pentagon.

For its part, the Pentagon isn't saying much about Linda Tripp these days. "This entire incident is under review by the office of the general counsel in the Department of Defense," says defense spokesman Lt. Col. Dick Bridges. "No further details will be released pending the outcome of that review." Bridges seems to be taking calls for the now-invisible Cliff Bernath, so it seems as good a time as any to ask whatever happened to THE WEEKLY STANDARD's request for a peek at other security-clearance files. Did Ken Bacon or Secretary Cohen ever admit to being arrested? Bridges has an answer at the ready. "Ken Bacon said he didn't mind. He said the answer's no. And the secretary . . ." There is silence on the phone. "I don't think we're going to go there." ♦

THE FOUR SWORDSMEN OF THE FEMINIST APOCALYPSE

By Noemie Emery

In its brief modern life, political feminism has had four main male backers, a daisy chain of stalwart allies, four femi-knights: Bob Packwood, Ted Kennedy, Gary Hart, and Bill Clinton. So pity the feminists, at it again, picking up after one more friend in trouble, a staunch advocate on the policy level, nonetheless running amok. It shouldn't happen, they say. They pretend it doesn't. But it does, again and again.

Noemie Emery is a writer living in Alexandria, Va.

The Kathleen Willey story is the fourth—or the ninth—report about Clinton and women the feminists have had to face since the 1992 election. Before then, they had to deal with their three other friends. Patricia Ireland of NOW called the Packwood affair a "blow in the stomach." Another feminist added, "When one of your principles—loyalty . . . —is in conflict with another—speaking out against despicable behavior—you are torn." Torn they also were with Palm Beach, Willie Smith, and Ted Kennedy. "Feminist leaders are standing by their man, just as the Kennedy women

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have always done," Eleanor Clift reported in *Newsweek*. "They separate private and public morality, and cite Kennedy's record . . . Kennedy has never strayed from the feminist agenda. Yet to call his private life a separate matter is to hide behind an outdated gentleman's code." The sisters, she added, were "squirming."

But why do the feminists find themselves squirming so often, and why are they so often "torn"? They were torn another time with Gary Hart, very model of the sensitized New Age male politician, friend (said Jane O'Reilly and Barbara Ehrenreich in the *New Republic*) of "social justice," "equal justice," and "arms control." In the same publication, Hendrik Hertzberg defended Hart's feminist record: "No major presidential candidate in American history ever put more women in such influential and important posts in his campaign."

But, oh, they all do—it's part of the pattern. The more impeccably correct all these men are in public, the more exploitative and deranged they are in private life. "Alleged Behavior Pattern Counters Image," ran the headline in the *Washington Post* when the Packwood charges broke five years ago. As the story said, Packwood was "a leading advocate of women's rights during his 24 years in the Senate," with a "much admired history of hiring women, promoting them, and supporting their careers." When this happens once, it may be an accident. When it happens twice, it could be a coincidence. When it happens three and four times (or five and six), it can no longer be described as an accident. It is something specific, a special dynamic, a pattern that should be explored.

Packwood was the most ardent of all pro-abortion fanatics, star of the feminist fund-raising circuit, friend of NARAL and of Gloria Steinem, with whom he once dined à deux in New York. Back in 1972, Steinem was advising George McGovern, whose presidential campaign was the national start of identity politics. McGovern's campaign was run by Gary Hart, master of New Age liberal politics, which he carried over to his own endeavors. Hart's idols had been John, and then Robert, Kennedy, both of whom he attempted to emulate. But the Kennedys' blood heir—their younger brother, Teddy—had also emerged as a national figure, blending the feminists' social agenda with a fondness for the welfare state. In the 1990s, while Kennedy anchored the cause in the Senate, Bill and Hillary Clinton moved into the White House, the first feminist first couple in American history. *Some* men really *could* help these women achieve what they wanted. It was truly the best of all worlds.

Issue-wise, each of these men was always faithful. But each also had a shadow side. When not conferring with Gloria Steinem, Packwood was hitting the bars of Hell's Canyon with a rotating harem of female assistants, lunging repeatedly at aides and staffers, and using his male aides as pimps. Complaints aired in 1992 revealed the names of nearly 30 women who claimed to have been pressured or assaulted by him. His victims were frequently powerless, and young. "Packwood often directed his advances toward young women, in entry-level slots," writes his biographer Mark Kirschmeier. "Many, after run-ins with Packwood, reacted with shame, self-doubt, and, most important, silence. They feared retribution after leaving Packwood's employ."

At the same time, Gary Hart had evolved from his Puritan youth into a Hollywood wannabe, using his newly formed Lone Ranger image to rack up a series of conquests, notwithstanding his marriage. As Gail Sheehy quotes a 1972 campaign co-worker, "Hart would speak for McGovern at a college political science club, and then spend the weekend with the club president. Monday mornings, time and again, these breathless, brainy little buds would turn up in Washington, to commit their lives to working for Gary Hart. Time and again, they would find themselves stuffing envelopes and weeping as they watched Gary pass their desk to the rest room—without so much as a hello." "Hart had a real Don Juan complex," the campaign worker concluded. "It's something he couldn't stop, but the women weren't people to him at all."

Meanwhile, Ted Kennedy had been outdoing his older brothers, though with less finesse and discretion. "The persistence with which he chased women became notorious," writes Ronald Kessler. "Reporters joked about his 'Blonde of the Week Club.' Columnist Marquis Childs quoted a senator friend of his who had occasionally traveled abroad with Kennedy: 'It was just like traveling with a bull. He'd see a woman down there, and say "I want her."' " In a friendly book, Burton Hersh writes of Kennedy's "random, hectic tomcatting," a "droit de seigneur" that went with political power. Hersh relates numerous stories of restaurant hijinks, with "many of the liveliest" featuring "horseplay with Chris Dodd," another feminist Solon: "There was the time when the two well-lubricated senators supposedly grabbed up the woman who was serving them for a terrifying game of 'waitress toss.'"

As for Clinton, his advances, wanted and otherwise, from the time of his marriage, are legion, and legend.

All four men believed in what Hart once called "reform marriage," in which wedlock is no barrier to dating. As Sheehy writes, Hart "showed up with a

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stewardess at a serious staff dinner after the '72 convention," with his wife back at home. Later, colleagues were stunned to learn he was married. Infidelity nestled within infidelity: After the exposure of Hart's cruise on the *Monkey Business*, a longtime mistress of his was stunned to find out he had cheated on her.

Wives were used largely as political props, when they were noticed at all. The ravaged faces of Lee Hart and Joan Kennedy unnerved many people; and Mrs. Packwood did not fare well either. Her feminist husband froze her out of his life, belittling her when he was drunk, which he often was, and driving her to nervous depressions. When she refused to back a presidential bid in the mid-'80s, he called her an "albatross," and more. In 1989, he convened his family, telling them he wanted no part of them any longer. "On his son's birthday," writes Kirschmeier, "Bob left [his wife], telling her he should have done so years before." Bill Clinton, with his power-shared marriage, would appear the exception, but the disregard he shows for his wife's reputation and feelings suggests otherwise. These people's politics do not begin at home.

Our four different stories read like four takes on a common résumé. And they have nothing in common with what is often referred to as "personal failings," or "sin." The femi-knight behavior is not like having been married twice, or having had a few affairs in the course of a marriage. This is not like the love relationships of FDR and Lucy Mercer, Wendell Willkie and Irita Van Doren, or Thomas Jefferson and Maria Cosway (and/or Sally Hemings). This is not a strong attraction to an individual person, which can be understood, and forgiven. Rather, it is the frenzied pursuit of nameless and featureless figures, reduced to one single physical function, who are quickly discarded after being used. These are not the relations of humans, and equals, but rather the habits of users with victims, the commerce of masters and slaves. As Suzannah Lessard writes in a 1979 piece on Ted Kennedy, "The constant pursuit . . . of semi-covert, just barely personal, and ultimately discardable encounters . . . suggests an old-fashioned, male-chauvinistic, exploitive view of women . . . I associate this type of behavior with misogyny. I don't believe men who really like women carry on in this way."

That would be putting it lightly. In 1992, the Clinton campaign boasted quite openly of its success in using private detectives to frighten and silence old flames. When this failed, these women were assailed in the press as "trailer trash," "tabloid trash," "trash-for-cash" bimbos, or unbalanced sluts. (Such is the price of attracting the eye of our feminist president.) Indeed, under pressure, the mean streaks appear with a vengeance. "Why was Ted Kennedy so anxious to leave Florida?" asked the Boston novelist James Carroll when Kennedy's nephew was cited for rape. "The senator has admitted his early knowledge that the police were investigating a 'serious matter,' but since it involved only 'sexual battery,' or 'sexual harassment,' he felt free to leave." (Only sexual battery? This is not the language Kennedy would use on the floor of the Senate.) Not all the sisters were charmed by this. As Eleanor Clift wrote in *Newsweek*, "A rape counselor thinks it is 'reprehensible' that Kennedy referred to the woman who brought rape charges against his nephew as 'some girl.'"

"Some girl," "that woman"—this is the voice of the feminist male when women are seen not in the abstract but in the particular, not as voting blocs or sources of money, but as real people. And that voice can be very cruel.

Clearly, the feminist males and their feminist supporters have a dysfunctional marriage, cemented by unholy needs. With their far-out agenda—late-term abortion, quotas, identity politics—the sisters find they have few mainstream backers, and have to make do where they can. This is why they stay with all of their renegade backers. But why do the men flock to *them*? First is the lure of issue convergence: To the narcissistic, satyristic, self-indulgent, perennial-adolescent male politician, the pro-choice movement is heaven on earth. No fuss, no bother, no weary commitments to women and children. Second is an even more cynical form of self-interest: A "correct" agenda buys a large zone of safety, like the paying of protection money to the mob. A pro-quota vote or an aggressively pro-choice platform buys years of immunity from pickets and clamor. It bought Bob Packwood some 10 years of silence. A Ted Kennedy less "right" on the feminist issues might have been forced from the Senate after the Palm Beach episode. Bill Clinton had the foresight to take out insurance against lawsuits, sexual-harassment suits among them, before his fateful meeting with Paula Jones in Little Rock. But his real insurance was taken out earlier, when he changed from pro-life to pro-choice. Along with his wife, his past and promised veto of the partial-birth-abortion ban is the single most critical factor buying reprieve from the feminist pickets. Thus feminists help creepy men cling to power.

Opportunistically, the feminists and their men friends are locked in a death grip, the feminists threatening the men with exposure and censure, the men threatening the feminists with leaving them alone and friendless in the political wilderness. But even this

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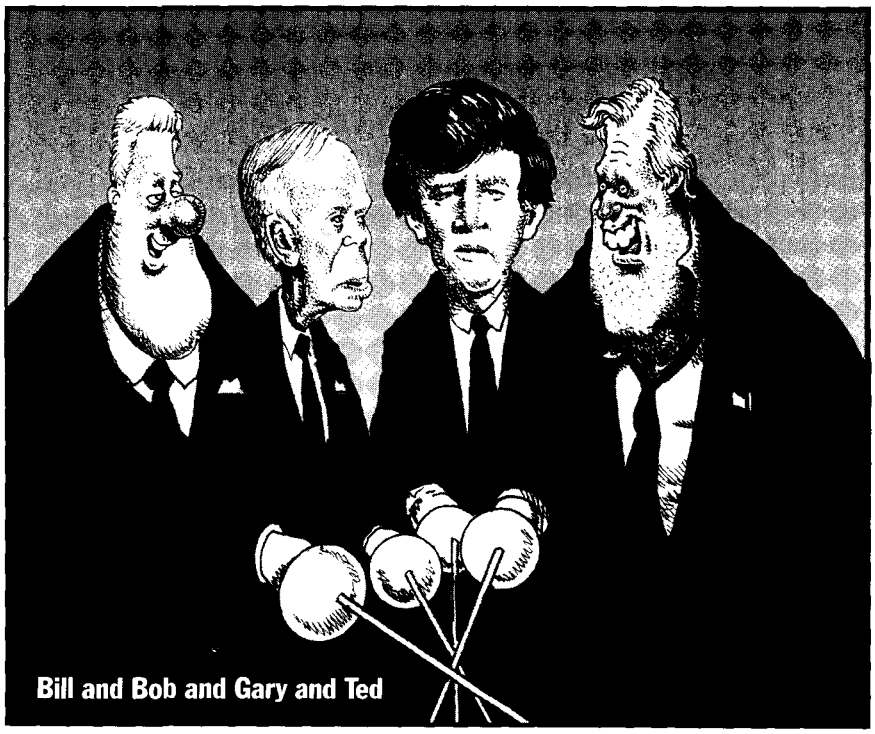
does not explain completely the peculiar attraction that feminism has for these men. Says a Washington psychiatrist, "They choose a public life and persona in direct contrast to their darker impulses," seeking a form of cheap moral salvation. "Embracing a cause counter to the sins and foibles you embody, is a way of wiping them out." The public stance tends to negate the private transgressions, minus the cost and pain of repentance. "They inoculate themselves, . . . build up a firewall so they can go on with their bad behavior," says Peter Collier, a biographer of the Kennedys and others. "They're finding a concept that keeps them from facing the reality about themselves."

This is a dynamic not all that unheard of in modern political life. The heir, unsure that he merits his millions, makes common political cause with the underclass, expunging his guilt, while still spending his money. The imperious film star, who treats aides like serfs, campaigns for the worker, while throwing fits if his small wants are not seen to. The show-business wiz denounces the income gap, then invests in his third Maserati. The Clintons, who sacrifice friends and aides daily, talk of compassion and empathy. And men accused of sins, even crimes, against women, crusade for their interests and rights. As Joe Klein suggests, guilt over the death he caused at Chappaquiddick may have pushed Ted Kennedy on his hard left-wing vector, to a "no questions asked indulgence of any and all groups claiming to be aggrieved," a political stance that allowed him to expunge the guilt of the accident, without correcting the conduct that caused it. But the problem is that these payoffs are given to groups, not the parties directly injured. The low-level aides assaulted by Packwood may not have liked all his causes. And perhaps a defense of late-term abortion is not what Mary Jo Kopechne would have wanted.


Bill and Bob and Gary and Ted

Sean Delonas

Feminists in effect have been acting as bagmen, taking the tributes due to other women, giving their friends the license to roam and to pillage, in exchange for the "right" kind of vote. But this sick little pact—a "symbiotic malignancy," in Collier's expression—may now be coming to an end. Kathleen Willey may be the great rock that breaks it: the vulnerable woman, in financial distress, shortly to be a widow by suicide, groped in the Oval Office by the president of the United States. Press criticism, from left, right, and center, has been uniformly disdainful and mocking. NOW chapters are defecting in fury. Patricia Ireland has been semi-defecting, while other "women's leaders" stay robotically faithful. Two days before the Willey interview on *60 Minutes*, Sgt. Gene McKinney was cleared by a military court of 18 counts of sexual harassment, brought by six different women. Shackled by the pass given by them to Clinton, the feminist leaders were mute. Their future capacity to intimidate men via protest—their way of attacking political enemies and disciplining supporters—has also been weakened. Their different words about similar acts will be thrown up against them. They may never make a credible protest again.

In 1991, says the *Los Angeles Times*, Bill Clinton, then a presidential candidate, castigated the Senate Judiciary Committee for its Hill-Thomas hearings, which, he said, "reminded me of a trial where someone accuses someone else of a sexual offense, and then an attempt is made to destroy the character of the victim." Who was that masked man, who since has been accused of assault and harassment, and who has called his accusers liars and trash? This is the typical feminist male, in the tradition of Packwood and Kennedy, whose addled brain never seems to have truly

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acknowledged what his wandering hands may have done. The same is true of feminist women, enabling many attacks on all women, while they spout out of all sides of their mouths. Possibly lying keeps them together. That, and knowing no shame.

In October 1991, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported that "Gov. Bill Clinton . . . placed on Mr. Bush responsibility for the treatment of Anita Hill." Said Clinton at the time, "George Bush certainly bears no glory for his personal attack on Anita Hill, which is consistent with a lot of his anti-woman positions." Bill, Bill—you should talk. ♦

THE AMERICAN WEI

What China's Most Famous Dissident Has Found in Exile

By Arch Puddington

Wei Jingsheng, the most widely known Chinese dissident, spent 17 years in prison for advocating political freedom as an alternative to Beijing's current system of Communist control, political cronyism, and carefully rationed market reforms. He arrived in the United States last November after the Chinese bowed to international pressure and, in effect, expelled their most troublesome critic, much as Leonid Brezhnev once expelled Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Like the Soviet dissidents of an earlier era, Wei has embarked on a busy round of interviews, speeches, and congressional testimony; he has received human-rights awards and been given a position with a human-rights center at Columbia University. A book of his experiences is forthcoming.

But the similarities with the Cold War dissidents end there. Solzhenitsyn was trying to warn America about a country which, most acknowledged, ranked as our chief political and military adversary. Wei Jingsheng, by contrast, is trying to convince the West to press for democratic reforms in China—a country few regard as a threat to peace and freedom, and many see as a splendid business opportunity. Celebrated Soviet dissidents were greeted as heroes and martyrs—or met with hostility at the hands of détentists who found their descriptions of a repressive and expansionist Soviet Union inconvenient. Wei, for his part, must contend not just with hostility, but also with apathy and indifference.

In the five months since his arrival in America, Wei has found that while Americans are generous in their tributes to his courage and moral integrity, they are skeptical of his hard-edged message about the Chinese political leadership. And that's putting it mildly. "There's not one thing I've said about China since I've been in the West that did not meet with some objection," Wei told me during a recent interview. "Inevitably, someone says: 'No, that can't be; you're wrong.'"

Wei arrived in the United States in the midst of an intense debate over America's policy towards China, over the extent to which human-rights and national-security concerns should drive that policy. The upshot of that debate has been made abundantly clear in the last week. Despite near-unanimous resolutions from both the House and Senate, the Clinton administration, for the first time since the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, will drop U.S. criticisms of China at the U.N. human-rights meeting in Geneva. And President Clinton's state visit to China—also the first such since Tiananmen—has now been moved up to June.

It is not, in short, a propitious atmosphere in which to be the leading critic of the Beijing regime. But true to his combative nature, Wei has not hesitated to join in the controversy. To what degree he can influence that debate is unclear, however. To be sure, he is under no illusions about the prospects for a dramatic change in America's China policy. Yet unlike Solzhenitsyn, who railed at the Free World for its cultural decadence and lack of political will, Wei declines to make sweeping criticisms of the American people or government. "I wouldn't call the American attitude towards China abnormal. Once a country achieves democracy and material wealth, it often finds it difficult to understand the problems of other societies.

Arch Puddington is vice president for research at Freedom House. He is completing a history of Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty.

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That is why we in China relied on ourselves to build democracy, rather than calling on the West for support."

Wei was the son of devoted Maoists. His father was in the Communist underground during the 1930s and later served in the Red Army; his mother joined the party as a student in the 1940s. By the time of Wei's birth in 1950, communism had triumphed, and both parents soon found jobs in the state bureaucracy. They lived in a special compound for the families of party members, and Wei and his siblings went to schools reserved for the children of party cadres.

At 16, Wei was caught up in the Cultural Revolution, the last of Mao Zedong's insane experiments in social revolution. Ironically, the Cultural Revolution would turn Wei and many members of his generation against communism in any form. He was among the roving army of teenagers—the so-called Red Guards—who, for a brief time, had the power to purge officials, humiliate elders, and terrorize the cadres. As was the case with many senior cadres, Wei's father was targeted for persecution and was sent to do hard labor in the countryside to "reform his thinking." Wei's mother was assigned to a lower-level job, where she was treated as a pariah and forced to write and rewrite self-criticisms.

For Wei, the Cultural Revolution was a time of political revelation of a very different kind than anticipated by Mao. He spent much of his time touring the provinces, where he encountered the shocking depths of Chinese rural poverty and witnessed conditions that contradicted everything he had been taught about the achievements of Communist revolution. His most disturbing experience occurred in the course of a visit to the ancestral home of his father. It was there that he began to hear stories of the Great Leap Forward, the most deadly of Mao's projects, whose human toll in the years from 1958-61 has been estimated at 20-30 million. The peasants described years of mass starvation not from natural disaster, as the regime claimed, but engineered by party officials in the name of political ideology. Wei visited one ghost village in which, he was told, the entire population had starved to death. But it was after he was told stories of cannibalism that Wei came to believe Mao was one of the great monsters of history. As he wrote in an autobiographical essay he prepared in 1979:

> By now I could make out the face of the executioner quite clearly. He was a man of the kind that appears, as the saying goes, only "once every few centuries worldwide, and once in several millennia in China"; he was Mao Zedong. It was Mao and his followers who had used their most evil systems and policies to force those parents, starved beyond reason, to give up their own flesh and blood to feed others in exchange for flesh to feed themselves.

Wei secured a position in the military after the Cultural Revolution simmered down, a fortunate development since former Red Guards were hated and considered unemployable. During his army stint, Wei had another jolting experience. Assigned to duty in the northwest provinces, he was among the troops who forcibly defended granaries against peasants who were rioting for food.

The thoroughness of Mao's idiosyncratic form of totalitarianism is reflected by the fact that so little of what Wei witnessed was known in China's cities, much less the outside world. China's isolation also had its effect on the country's democracy movement, which emerged in the late 1970s after Mao's death. Wei and his friends knew very little of Western-style democracy aside from what they gleaned from the broadcasts of the Voice of America and the BBC World Service. Since their education was limited to Marxian interpretations of history, they returned to the classics of Communist literature, especially those works which probed the nature of the ideal socialist society. They discovered, of course, a yawning gap between the kind of society envisioned by Marx and the corrupt and privilege-ridden society that had emerged after a quarter century of Maoism.

By the time of the Democracy Wall movement in 1979 that would make him a renowned figure, Wei had moved beyond a Marxian mindset and vocabulary. His famous essay that year, "The Fifth Modernization," argues in clear, direct language that the Four Modernizations urged by Deng Xiaoping—in industry, agriculture, defense, and science—were insufficient. If China was to join the modern world, it would require a fifth modernization, political democracy.

Like dissidents in other Communist countries, Wei was charged with espousing counterrevolutionary propaganda and reactionary ideas and threatening the stability of the Communist system. The authorities also managed to find a national-security rationale for his arrest. In conversations with foreign journalists, Wei had mentioned the names of the generals who were leading China's forces during its brief war with Vietnam; for this, he was accused of betraying state secrets and handed a 15-year sentence.

In a sense, Wei was the victim of high-level Communist party politics. Deng initially encouraged the democracy movement in order to discredit his principal rival, Hua Guofeng, in their struggle for party con-

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trol. But once his power was consolidated, Deng turned on the democracy activists. A series of arrests and secret trials were ordered, with Wei's being the centerpiece case. Deng is reported to have personally ordered Wei's arrest, determined the charges to be brought against him, and decided the length and conditions of his imprisonment.

As an instrument of psychological cruelty, Chinese prisons have few rivals in the annals of the modern totalitarian state. Although Wei served his term during a period in which China was undergoing a process of liberalization, he was subjected to the kind of severe prison regimen usually associated with the early, Stalinist phase of Communist control. During the first several years he was placed in solitary confinement, with a bright light shining in his eyes day and night. So limited was the opportunity for simple human contact that he developed a soreness in his larynx from lack of use.

Wei fended off despair by pondering the question of China's political future and by dreaming up scientific inventions. In a major concession toward the end of his first prison term, he was allowed to raise rabbits. And, of course, he wrote frequently—letters to his siblings, complaints to prison officials, assessments of China's political condition to the country's highest leaders, including Deng Xiaoping himself. The letters were often provocative—Wei called Deng "small-minded and lacking in vision." By treating them as equals, Wei was telling Deng and other leaders that their attempts to subdue him were doomed to failure; he would not, under any circumstance, follow the traditional Chinese pattern of kow-towing by adopting a tone of elaborate politeness when addressing the leader. "In China," he explained, "people believe that if you don't ask politely, you won't be taken seriously. I decided to make my observations as forcefully as possible because I wanted to make clear that I was not asking for some personal favor. Furthermore, I believed that you had to show the leaders that you were not afraid to die if you wanted them to take you seriously."

Although Wei's case was taken up by human-rights organizations, Western governments did not exert the kind of political and moral pressure on Beijing that they brought to bear on the Soviets for their persecution of Andrei Sakharov, Anatoly Scharansky, and other dissidents. The Chinese regime, furthermore, expressed no regrets over the growing number of political prisoners in its jails. In late December 1986, Deng boasted: "We put Wei Jingsheng behind bars, didn't we? Did that damage China's reputation? We haven't released him, but China's reputation hasn't been tarnished; in fact, our reputation improved day-by-day." Nevertheless, Beijing thought it prudent to release Wei six months early, in September 1993, after he had served a total of 14 and a half years. This, in order to bolster its (ultimately unsuccessful) bid to host the Olympics.

Upon release, Wei took up where he had left off. He attacked the government in interviews with foreign journalists and in essays written for the foreign press. He organized a fund for the families of those killed in the 1989 massacre in Tiananmen Square. He was then "disappeared" by the government for some months, given a secret trial, and handed another 15-year term, which he served until the authorities forced him into exile in the United States last fall. Wei had resisted exile in the past; his mission, he believed, was to participate in the struggle for democracy at home. But with mounting health problems—he suffers from a weak heart, hypertension, arthritis, and a disease of the gums that cost him most of his teeth—and with the regime apparently prepared to keep him in jail indefinitely, he agreed, under duress, to accept America's offer of asylum.

Despite his ordeal, Wei appears surprisingly fit; his most obvious physical malady is the dissident's traditional smoker's cough. He remains unembittered at the Chinese leadership for taking away the prime years of his life, and undaunted by the resistance to his criticism of the Chinese system that he has encountered in the West.

He has, in fact, delivered some exceptionally tough, even strident, speeches during his few months in the United States. He has also given evidence of a weak grasp of postwar history. He told a Council on Foreign Relations audience that the United States bore responsibility for communism's triumph in China and asserted that America had "casually turned its back on a most important long-term ally." He also denounced the opening to China engineered by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger as having rescued the Communist regime from near-certain collapse. He contends that American-Chinese ties have been a one-sided affair, in which the United States has made all the concessions and the Chinese have reaped all the benefits.

These judgments may be questioned, even by those who condemn the abuses of China's dictators. But on one issue Wei is almost certainly right, and that is the failure of the West to come to grips with the evil of Chinese communism. He believes that while American scholars, journalists, and government officials

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were reasonably well informed about the workings of the Soviet system, the West remained fundamentally ignorant of the Chinese version of communism. As a result, he and other Chinese dissidents are looked on in Washington as nuisances and obstacles to improved relations. A further problem, Wei believes, stems from an organized whispering campaign to discredit him and other dissidents mounted by what he calls the "friends of Beijing" among America's business and political elites.

But if Americans have historically been ill-informed or naïve about Chinese political realities, Wei himself gives contradictory assessments of China's present condition. He acknowledges that the Chinese people are much freer today than during Maoist times, but insists that the country's leaders, including Deng, had nothing to do with liberalizing change, a statement which few China experts would accept.

In Wei's interpretation, China's leaders have jettisoned Communist policies except for those that help control the population and ensure their continued political rule. The leaders have devoted much study to the unraveling of communism in the Soviet bloc and are determined not to repeat the mistakes that led to the collapse of that system.

Wei Jingsheng

Chas Fagan

While Wei believes that the party ranks include genuine reformers, their efforts inevitably meet resistance from those who see democratic change as a threat to their exalted positions. Wei is opposed to an American policy that bestows economic benefits on China, like most-favored-nation trade status, unless there is clear evidence of a movement toward political liberalization.

On the other hand, Wei favors policies that acquaint the Chinese people with Western ideas about democracy and freedom, such as cultural exchanges and, especially, Western broadcasts, which he sees as more cost effective in undermining the system in China than additional armaments. Wei himself is given extensive coverage by Radio Free Asia and the Voice of America, whose commentaries on China, he says, have improved since a number of broadcasters from the mainland were hired.

Wei is especially dismayed by the West's complacent response to China's coercive population-control measures. He allows that the one-child policy, though still China's official policy, is less rigorously enforced than in the past. But it still results in forced abortions and sterilizations and has contributed to the murder of female infants by parents who want sons. Many Chinese, Wei says, interpret the tepid response from Western governments, not to mention the open praise which China receives for its population measures from elite circles in the West, as a reflection of anti-Chinese bias. "Chinese believe that the West fears China because of its large population. Even the best-intentioned Western supporter of population control can never convince the Chinese that their motives have nothing to do with this fear." Wei himself is certain that many Westerners simply believe "China has too many people, and something has to be done about it." He sees this as "just another version of the notion that Asians are different from everyone else, and don't require the same level of human rights."

The historic mission of the exile from totalitarianism is to remind the free world that a political elite which persecutes its own people is not a suitable partner for a cooperative relationship with a democracy. We do not look to men who have spent their lives under conditions of intellectual isolation or imprisonment for advice on the intricacies of geopolitics, but rather to inform us about the fundamental character of a political system that treats advocates of freedom as enemies of the state.

A Chinese elite that fears Wei Jingsheng can scarcely be described as confident and stable, despite the arrogance of the top leaders. A leadership that tries to regulate family size and goes to elaborate lengths to keep its people ignorant of the outside world should be treated with wariness, if not outright suspicion, by those who value freedom. This is Wei's basic message, and it is one he offers with a rare moral authority and personal courage. ♦

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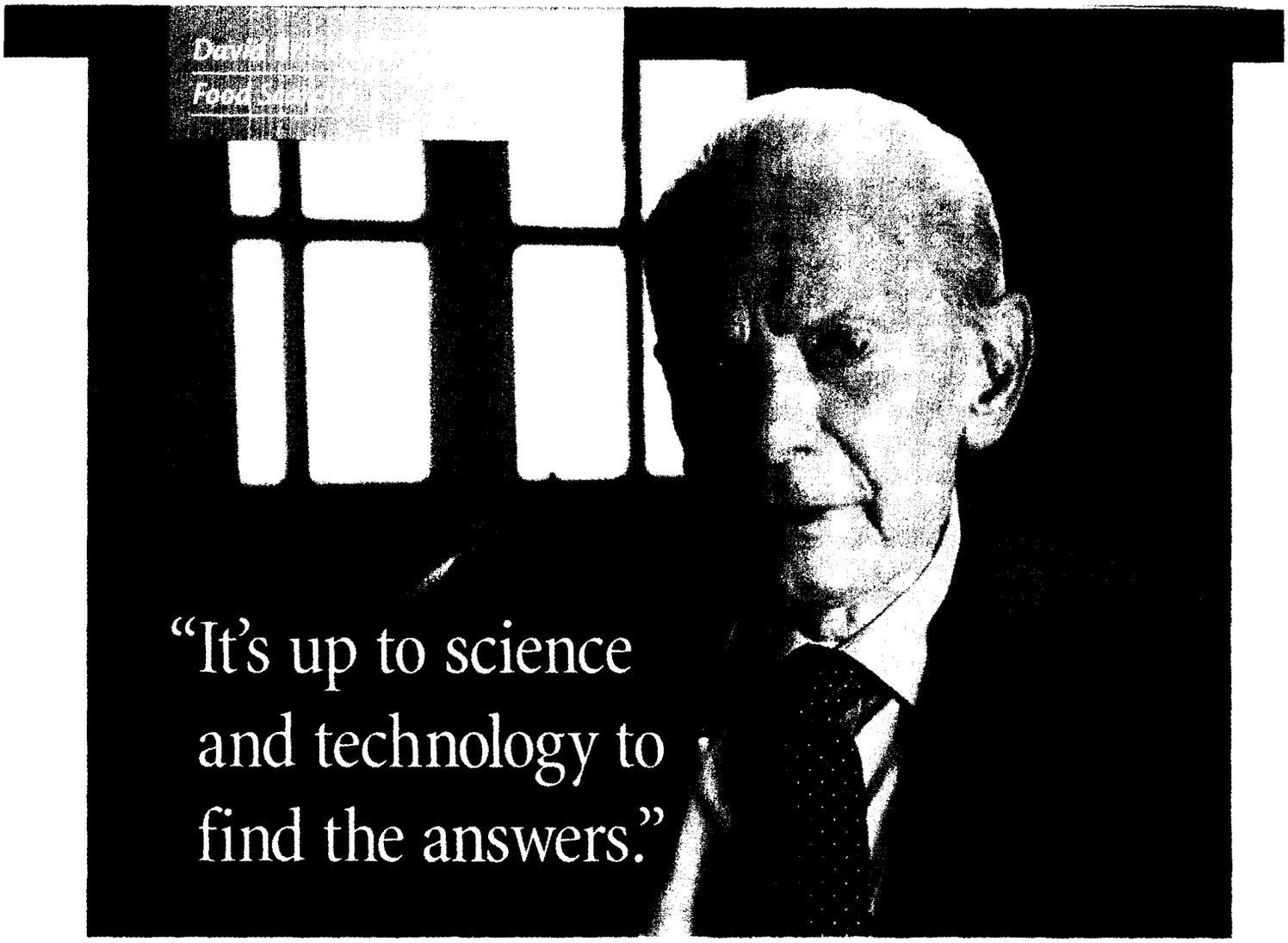

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The Autumn of American Liberalism

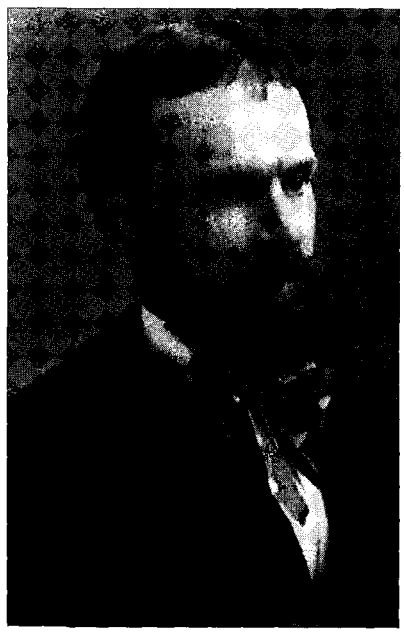
In Defense of William James

By J. Bottum

Liberalism, in the finest and least political sense of the word, was an accident of the nineteenth century—an interlude of beauty, like New England in the fall, between the spring of the Puritans and the winter of the twentieth-century radicals.

In America, at the peak of its late-Victorian foliage, liberalism was humane, intelligent, and engaged. It was ethically serious, intellectually open, socially approved, and religiously advanced: more Presbyterian than Methodist, more Congregational than Presbyterian, more Episcopal than Congregational, and more Unitarian than them all. It was energetic and hardworking, even when more from nervous excitement than from real robustness. It was, as it were, Massachusetts after the death of Ralph Waldo Emerson: assured of science, convinced of morality, and certain the future would be better than the past. It was beautiful, as high a pitch, perhaps, as human culture has ever reached. And it was doomed, twirling over the abyss like the last red and yellow leaves on a dying tree.

The high liberals of the late nineteenth century were (to offer a different metaphor) living above quicksand, treading on boards laid down two hundred years before by their Puritan forebears. And whether they stepped gingerly or confidently—whether they were as aware as Nathaniel Hawthorne or as unaware as the Harvard president Charles Eliot Norton of how rickety their intellectual flooring had become—none of them seemed capable of doing anything to keep from falling through.



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A Life of William James
Harcourt Brace, 467 pp., $35

None of them, that is, except a professor and public lecturer named William James. His current fame as the founder of American psychology and America's best philosopher certainly owes something to the abiding curiosity readers have about the characters in his wealthy New England family. There was his strangely thwarted father Henry Sr., an eccentric Swedenborgian theologian. There was his spinster sister Alice, a brilliant diarist and an incurable hypochondriac. And most of all, there was his brother Henry, the Bostonian novelist who fled to England and wrote the most modern of Victorian fiction in a prose so dense it was like tangled twine: The brothers, one English critic observed, consisted of a philosopher who wrote like a novelist and a novelist who wrote like a philosopher.

More than anything else, it seems to be an interest in tracing these family relations that motivates James's latest biographer, Linda Simon. The shelf of James biographies is already crowded, with Ralph Barton Perry's *The Thought and Character of William James* (1935) jostling Gay Wilson Allen's *William James* (1967) and Gerald Myers's *William James: His Life and Thought* (1986). But Simon—the editor of the 1996 *William James Remembered*, an anthology of memoirs by such contemporaries as Gertrude Stein and George Santayana—has managed nonetheless to make a real contribution in her new *Genuine Reality: A Life of William James*, adding an enormous amount of detail about the complex and curious relations among those complex and curious figures who made up the philosopher's extended family. What he once observed about his brother Henry was just as true of himself: "He is a native of the James family, and has no other country."

It is, however, for reasons other than his family that William James remains a visible historical figure—

J. Bottum is Books & Arts editor of The Weekly Standard.

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perhaps the only American philosopher with a well-known personality, fleshed out in our minds far beyond either his fellow pragmatists Charles Sanders Peirce and John Dewey or his fellow Harvard professors (and non-pragmatists) Josiah Royce and Santayana.

Simon's success in *Genuine Reality* is to present (in half the nine-hundred pages that seems to have become the industry standard for biographies) all the available facts about the man's life. Her only failures are her inability to convey the mood of the days in which James lived and her indecision about why James matters. But these failures are enough to make her book unhelpful to anyone without a strongly formed opinion about James, for it is finally his life's work in philosophy for which she is unable to account: uncertain what James was seeking in his writings, and unsure what they amount to.

The broad outlines of James's life are clear enough. Born in 1842 to a family made wealthy through his grandfather's early investments in the Erie Canal, he had all the connections and opportunities of the well-born Boston Brahman: At two months old, he was visited by Emerson, who (according to family legend, related by Henry) condescended "to admire and give his blessing to the lately-born babe." Attending various schools in Europe from 1855 to 1860, he found himself at age eighteen undecided about his future. A year endeavoring to be a painter was followed by studies at Harvard starting in 1861, first in chemistry, then at the medical school in 1864.

His medical studies soon gave way, however, to an expedition to Brazil with the naturalist Louis Agassiz. It was on this trip that James contracted smallpox and began to share the lifelong health problems—some physical, some psychological—that plagued his entire family. After a year of recuperation in Germany, he returned to Harvard in 1868 and took his medical degree the next year.

The professional certification seemed at first to make little difference, as James recoiled from actual medical practice and suffered in 1870 a profound emotional crisis whose onset he later described in harrowing terms:

> There arose in my mind the image of an epileptic patient whom I had seen in the asylum, a black-haired youth with greenish skin, entirely idiotic, who used to sit all day on one of the benches, or rather shelves against the wall, with his knees drawn up against his chin, and the coarse gray undershirt, which was his only garment, drawn over them enclosing his figure. He sat there like a sort of sculptured Egyptian cat or Peruvian mummy, moving nothing but his black eyes and looking absolutely non-human. This image and my fear entered into a species of combination with each other. *That shape am I*, I felt, potentially.

After two years of ineffective psychological treatment, it proved to be his medical degree and Boston friendships that provided the means for his cure: a minor Harvard lectureship in anatomy in 1873, to which he added psychology in 1875 and philosophy in 1879. No one would have predicted much future production from a man who by thirty-one had given no sign that he would ever settle down to anything, but James blossomed as a professor. Forced to a long-delayed maturity by his teaching and his marriage to Alice Howe Gibbens in 1878, he became over the next thirty years as dominant an intellectual figure as America has ever known.

One interesting feature of Linda Simon's *Genuine Reality* is its documentation of the seriousness with which James took his hobby of investigating parapsychology and the ghostly manifestations of the supernatural. But probably more helpful for understanding the philosopher is her insistence on the mistakenness of what might be called the "standard account" of James's life. That account—deriving mostly from Perry's first biography—claims that James's enormous productivity from his thirties to his death in 1910 is explained primarily by his triumph over his one breakdown at the age of twenty-eight. Simon carefully demonstrates, however, the extent to which James remained vulnerable to anxiety the rest of his life. What changed after 1870 was his ability to direct that anxiety toward productive work and rephrase his crises as philosophical problems he could try to solve.

Among philosophers who wrote in English, only the prose of David Hume ranks with that of James. He loved sharp metaphors drawn from common experience, and he had a clean, powerful style, sometimes thought by other philosophers to be *too* accessible to general audiences—lacking the high opacity owed to serious philosophical work. (He thus stands in contrast to Dewey, whom Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. once described as speaking the way "God would have spoken had He been inarticulate but keenly desirous to tell you how it was.")

And among philosophers in any language, there is probably no one who ranks with James in sheer pleasantness of personality. To Alfred North Whitehead, he was "that adorable genius." His sister Alice wrote in one of her last diary entries: "All that there is to be said of him, of course, is that he is simply himself, a creature who speaks in another language as Henry says from the rest of mankind and who would lend life and charm to a treadmill."

He had his lapses, as Simon shows, envious from time to time in middle age of his brother's literary success, annoying his wife by the flirtatiousness with which he treated the young women who flocked to his lectures. On a visit to England, he exasperated his brother by climbing over the garden wall to get a glimpse of Henry's next-door neighbor, G. K.

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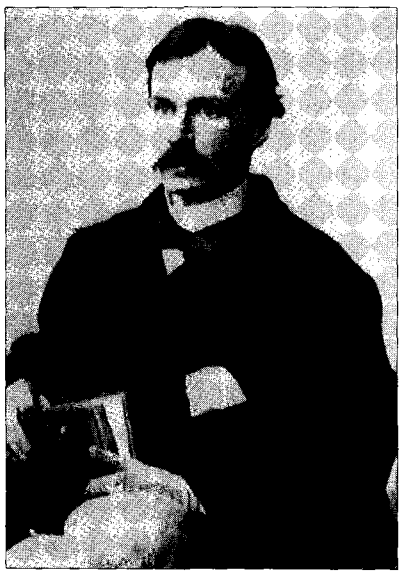
Chesterton. But Jacques Barzun—whose 1983 *A Stroll with William James* remains the best introduction to the philosopher—insists repeatedly upon the word "gentleman" to describe him, and James seems in fact to have been the highest example of a certain very Bostonian, nineteenth-century type.

But beyond his prose and personality, James is important for a far more significant reason. Throughout his work—in his teaching, his public lectures, his innumerable reviews and magazine pieces, and such writings as his *Principles of Psychology* (1890), *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), *Pragmatism* (1907), and *The Meaning of Truth* (1909)—there is manifest his constant project, his unsystematic but nonetheless unceasing aim to find an epistemology that would allow Americans, or at least himself, to retain both confidence in the science that had been his fascination since he finished medical school and the high-liberal moral certainty that was his birthright as a New Englander.

His brother Henry seemed, if not content, then at least determined to describe the disease of America in endlessly precise detail. In novels from *Daisy Miller* in 1879 to *The Ambassadors* in 1903, he betrayed for all to see the inner life of attenuated Americans—those weak figures whose consciousness, like their social life, moved entirely in cloudy shiftings and inherited associations. In the fiction of Henry James there is mercilessly revealed a people whose moral thoughts, untethered from the intellectual foundations of previous generations, became moods rather than ideas.

But William James was engaged not in etiology but in seeking a cure. And his solution was pragmatism, the philosophical school that is perhaps best described as a complicated theory of truth, a way of insisting that we examine—before deciding whether a proposition is true—the consequences that would follow if the proposition were true: "The whole function of philosophy," he declared, "ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the true one." But it is difficult to put the whole theory in a simple way with any fairness. Even James himself occasionally created difficulties when he tried—shocking his contemporaries, for example, when he declared that pragmatism is concerned only with the "cash value" of an idea.



James at the time of his nervous collapse

Deriving from the empiricism of David Hume and from fascination with what was perceived in the nineteenth century to be the unique logic of scientific experimentation, pragmatism was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the 1870s meetings of the ironically named Metaphysical Club, a discussion group attended by Peirce and James. The critical opinion of professional philosophers seems now to be that Peirce had, all in all, the better philosophical mind, and it was in the brilliant 1878 essay "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" that Peirce first laid out the principles that would come to define pragmatism.

It was, however, James who launched the school of thought as a new philosophical method when he gave his lecture "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results" in 1898. There were surprisingly profound differences among the pragmatists—most notably in the conflict between Peirce's insistence on the basic reality of ideas and James's nominalistic dismissal of any reality beyond the particulars of bare experience.

But there was a dominant stream of pragmatism that flowed from Peirce to James to John Dewey, James's successor as America's best-known philosopher. And Dewey—epistemologically and politically radical, and dominating the philosophical scene from James's death in 1910 until his own in 1952—turned philosophy in highly nominalistic directions: defining truth as "the experimental determination of future consequences," severing the last links to the world of nineteenth-century liberalism, and taking up in a radical way the political and social issues that Peirce and James had mostly ignored.

There are further streams that flow straight from Dewey's version of pragmatism to both the identity politics of the late twentieth century and such contemporary American philosophical works as Richard Rorty's 1979 *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, which argues that we can hold only a "philosophy without mirrors" that deprives us of all ability to judge truth. One can, of course, insist too much on the connection between radical politics and radical epistemology—between the activism of what the French call the "Generation of '68" and the postmodernists' theories of knowing.

But once Dewey had cut the thread that tied the philosophical school to New England's stern Protestant roots, pragmatism in America was bound to issue in a politics that is merely the struggle for power and an epistemology that is primarily a sophisticated skepticism.

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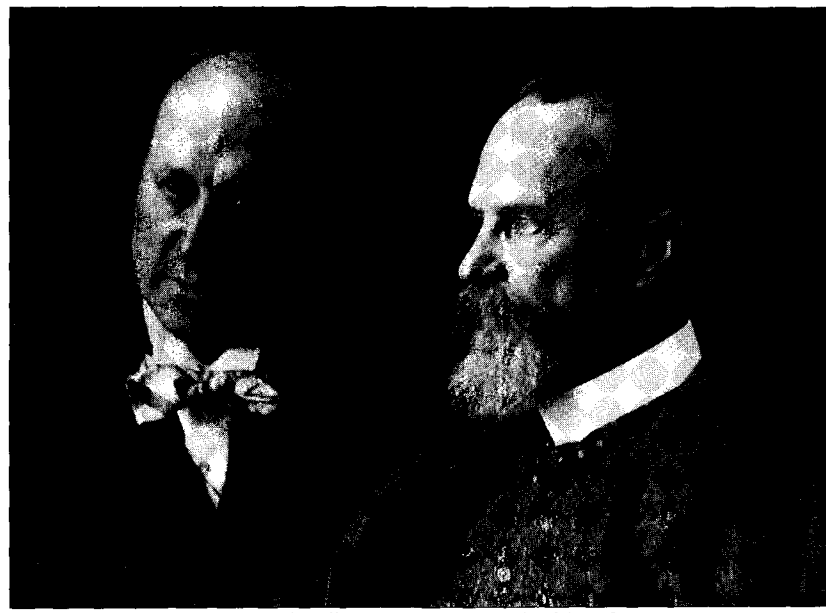
It is not William James but John Dewey who is in fact the most influential philosopher in American history, thanks to his widely read pedagogical writings and his association with Teachers' College at Columbia University. And the utter triumph of Dewey in the field of education meant that it was the untethered form of pragmatism that would be passed along to future generations.

It seems almost superfluous to observe that James was hoping for something different from his philosophy. He accepted a certain amount of nominalism as the price he thought he had to pay for being able to hold both science and liberal morality. But nominalism does not necessarily imply the refusal of a discernible public good that transcends political power relations, and it does not necessarily demand an intellectual skepticism. "Our passional nature," James declared, "not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds; for to say, under such circumstances, 'Do not decide, but leave the question open,' is itself a passional decision—just like deciding yes or no—and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth."

What James wanted from his philosophy is perhaps best revealed in a passage—written by his student Giovanni Papini—that James once declared the finest short definition of pragmatism: It is "a collection of attitudes and methods" that takes a position of

> armed neutrality in the midst of doctrines. It is like a corridor in a hotel, from which a hundred doors open into a hundred chambers. In one you may see a man on his knees praying to regain his faith; in another a desk at which sits someone eager to destroy all metaphysics; in a third a laboratory with an investigator looking for new footholds by which to advance upon the future. But the corridor belongs to all, and all must pass there. Pragmatism, in short, is a great *corridor-theory*.

To some extent the corridor-theory describes all American philosophy after Charles Sanders Peirce. No longer confident of the rightness of a single point of view—of intellectual Christendom, as it were—but possessing still the inherited attitude and mood of unity, philosophers invariably sought a sort of rising above the conflicting viewpoints to a theory of knowledge that could affirm, if not the *truth* of all practices, then at least the *practice* of all practices.



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Henry and William James at the peak of their fame

For James, however, the key lay in the possibility that a particular practice might issue for the individual in genuine truth. His liberalism was to some degree an affirmation of Emerson's demand for "democratic minds," citizens possessed of a quasi-nominalistic awareness of the necessity to admit in a democracy the plurality of searches for what Emerson thought a monistic if inexpressible truth. But James believed also in a sort of ultimately practical realism that is the opposite of nominalism: Though at the abstract level of epistemology there may be no absolute knowledge, there is nonetheless in concrete experience the possibility of knowledge that is *right* in all the classic senses of the word—true, beautiful, and good.

Everything changed once Dewey reinterpreted the notion of a democratic mind. What once meant that proper citizens in a democracy must share certain accepting attitudes of mind came in Dewey to mean that the mind itself must become a democracy, a kind of scientifically inclined polity in which no point of view is ever allowed to abolish any other—except, of course, for those religious points of view, like Christianity, that continue to insist upon the reality of truth. By the time the stream of American thought reaches someone like Richard Rorty, everything but ironic detachment is banned from the liberal outlook. James hoped from pragmatism a corridor off which are many rooms where we might live with truth. But after Dewey, we can only visit, no longer able to choose a room in which to live. And after Rorty, all the doors are locked.

We might put this another way by observing the difference between James's importance in his first field, psychology, and his second

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field, philosophy. There's no denying the significance of James in psychology. His teaching introduced the developing discipline to an entire generation of influential Harvard students, his *Principles of Psychology* defined the course of future academic study in America, and his popular expositions of mental science created a public fascination that continues to this day.

But James is important to the history of psychology primarily because he happened to come early, writing in those first days of a discipline that was bound to emerge whether he did his work or not. If it hadn't been James, it would have been someone else.

He is important in the history of philosophy for precisely the opposite reason: He happened to come last. If it hadn't been William James, it would have been no one. He was the last man able to receive his moral inheritance as simply as he received the money his grandfather made speculating on the Erie Canal.

After James, the historical line that runs from the seventeenth-century Puritans to the nineteenth-century liberals is broken, and thus even in the next generation someone like T. S. Eliot must assert the ground of tradition by an act of will rather than an acknowledgment of existing fact. After James, it is too late to maintain the connection of democratic liberalism to its quickly fading religious inheritance. The Puritan root of liberalism's moral mood and the transcendental condition for its possibility is the reality of God. After James, or at least after Dewey's reformation of James, coherent liberalism can only be radical and coherent religion can only be conservative.

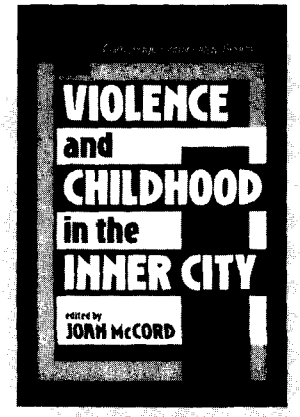
It is perhaps this that lurks behind James's abiding interest in crystal-gazing mediums, table-rapping apparitions, and all the other paraphernalia of parapsychology, for he longed for some concrete experience of the transcendent. And it is certainly this that stands behind "The Will to Believe," a brilliant talk he gave in 1896. There are beliefs, he declares, that may be logically possible for us to hold, but it is pointless to discuss them unless they are something more than logically possible—unless they are "living" possibilities, in the way that electricians speak of the difference between "live" and "dead" wires. The religious problem of the age, as James laid it out, was not so much combating disbelief as finding a way to maintain the "live wire" of belief—that which made it possible for even nonbelievers to share the moral knowledge of right and wrong.

For its originator Peirce, pragmatism was merely a philosophy; for William James, pragmatism was something more. Dewey was right, of course, when he observed that the principal difference between them was that "Peirce wrote as a logician and James as a humanist."

But James needed a sort of circularity for his humanism that the older Peirce never bothered with and the younger Dewey actively denied. Even while he declined orthodox religion for himself, he declared in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* his faith that "the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance; union with the higher universe is our true end; spiritual energy flows in and produces effects within the phenomenal world." Pragmatism was what made such belief possible in an age of science, and that belief was what allowed the pragmatism.

It was all incredibly delicate, balanced on a needle's point. And within a generation, it had all been swept away—as perhaps it was in any case doomed to be. But at least for a moment William James seemed to offer what America rejected even while it declared him its premier philosopher: the intellectual means to extend for a few more years the New England autumn of high American liberalism. ♦

Making our cities safer...



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Violence and Childhood in the Inner City

Joan McCord, *Editor*

The contributors to this book believe that something can be done to make life in American cities safer, to make growing up in urban ghettos less risky, and to reduce the violence that so often afflicts urban childhood. They consider why there is so much violence, why some people become violent and others do not, and why violence is more prevalent in some areas. The authors also discuss how the urban environment affects childhood development. They review a variety of intervention strategies and consider when it is appropriate to use them and towards whom they should be targeted.

Contributors: *Joan McCord, Elijah Anderson, Robert J. Sampson, Terrie E. Moffitt, Ronald G. Slaby, Felton Earls, Jacqueline Barnes, Nancy G. Guerra*

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POP TORTS

The Insanity of American Legal Procedure

By Jeremy Rabkin

Paul Campos is dizzy from America's excesses of lawyering. He was that way even before the White House decided to unleash its legal team against the legal team the independent counsel had unleashed to investigate the Monica Lewinsky affair. But with the legal maneuverings of Bill Clinton and Kenneth Starr dominating current headlines, the normally staid Oxford University Press has moved with lightning speed to keep Campos's new little volume on the latest wave—sending out to reviewers, for example, a recent newspaper column in which Campos applies his critique to the ongoing investigations of Clinton's misdeeds.

Paul Campos
Jurismania
The Madness of American Law
Oxford University Press, 192 pp., $23

Although Campos is a professor of law at the University of Colorado, he declares his disdain for both the academic and the lawyerly ways of saying things. He is a man on a mission, or at least a book tour, and he puts his message with shocking bluntness: The excessive demands Americans put on the law have become "a form of mental illness." His new book, *Jurismania*, is an interesting sketch of the varying ways in which this madness manifests itself. But it may also be, in the end, a symptom of what it decries.

The first exhibit in Campos's pathology report on the American legal system is the trial of O. J. Simpson. Simpson's celebrity and personal wealth meant that "there was essentially no economic barrier to transforming the rule of law from classroom theory into courtroom practice"—where the academic "emphasis on 'getting it right' . . . produces a distinctive vision of law that is totalizing, relentless, and mostly oblivious to such crass considerations as time, money, and possible limits to the powers of human reason."

So we witnessed the absurd spectacle of a trial where the impaneling of the jury alone "took up far more time than was spent on the debate and ratification of the original U.S. Constitution." Then there followed, along with the endless rounds of testimony and cross-examination, the hundreds of hours spent on "evidentiary rulings, interpleadings, and motions of every conceivable sort." And in the end, "the surviving jurors disposed of the issue at hand with a brisk indifference to the evidence that itself suggested the futility of the whole exercise." The excessive refinements of the legal process have put trials and skillful attorneys beyond the reach of all but the most affluent defendants, and the legal system has turned out to be in actuality far more capricious and inegalitarian than it was before the Warren Court began its procedural revolution in the name of "fairness."

Hardly anyone could dispute Campos's point that the excesses of the Simpson trial are symptomatic of general problems in what law professors call "criminal procedure," the way we undertake the trial of criminals. But Campos's larger point is that our flawed criminal procedure is itself symptomatic of larger trends. The demand for "reasoned decision making" continually drives the substantive requirements of law toward quite irrational extremes. "The hundred-page appellate court opinion, the two-hundred-page, five-hundred-footnote law review article, the thousand-page statute, the sixteen-thousand-page set of administrative regulations" are all monuments to a system that has run amok in its pursuit of "rational analysis." So we post comprehensive notices about forbidden conduct and comprehensive warnings about the risks involved in a product or a procedure, and they turn out to be so obsessively comprehensive that no one can read them—and they remain filled with ambiguity, anyway. The system "forgets that the more it elaborates itself, the more manipulable the system will become and the more unpredictable the social effects of such manipulations will be."

Meanwhile, we press the most "intractable moral and political issues" onto the courts—"race and religion, sex and death, all the things one should never bring up in polite conversation"—and then find out that constitutional law is incoherent. "*Of course* it is," Campos shouts. "You were thinking that perhaps we lawyers were going to *solve* some of these problems?"

Because they see the system up close, lawyers do understand, at some level, that much of what they do and say is part of an act. And some of the most timely passages in Campos's little polemic deal with the strangely disorienting effect of such role-playing. In reality, "American courts are now gigantic bureaucracies, processing more than thirty-million lawsuits per year, with all the attendant evils that mark enormous, anonymous government institutions." But from the "breathless analysis" of the latest trial on talk-show television to the "equally starry-eyed reportage of the latest joint plurality opinion of the Supreme Court" in the *New York*

Jeremy Rabkin teaches in the department of government at Cornell University.

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Times, we nurture a "remarkable romanticism that surrounds the cultural ideal of law."

Law and lawyering have taken over more and more cultural authority, displacing religion, tradition, and common sense. And Campos worries that as a result "the habits of the legal mind and the structure of legal argument" have become the dominant tone of public discussion. This has real costs: "Lawyers are often impelled by their professional obligations to become something akin to emotional prostitutes; that is, to be persons whose public personae require the simulation of inauthentic affective states as a condition of their compensation. . . . A lawyer trying a case must always be ready to express what seems like genuine outrage at the drop of the proverbial hat." This style of presentation has now infected political debate, dominated by "emotional pyrotechnics from amateur litigators." Yet "those who imitate the professional personae of lawyers are usually unaware that lawyers are almost always faking it." Or maybe—as Campos suggests about the talking heads who appear on such television debate programs as *Crossfire*—they know it all too well and cheerfully take up the game, as "the simulation of outrage has become a seemingly permanent part of the broader political culture."

Campos himself seems determined to step back from feigned outrage. But his usual way of doing so is to switch from lawyerly fulmination to professorial vaporing. He rattles on for pages and pages about the cultural crises feeding the legal crisis: "Secular materialist rationalism has become the unofficial religion of the American cultural and political elites" and with this "contemporary collapse . . . of both traditionally religious and overtly political forms of metaphysical belief, our law tends more and more to become both the patriotism of the deracinated and the de facto faith of the apostate." *Jurismania* is a book that has no time for Blackstone or the *Federalist Papers* but does manage to draw into its exposition James Joyce, Franz Kafka, and Michel Foucault—to say nothing of Friedrich Nietzsche, who appears eleven times in fewer than two-hundred pages.

IMPANELING THE SIMPSON JURY TOOK MORE TIME THAN DEBATING AND RATIFYING THE CONSTITUTION.

There may be a serious point here, but Campos can't quite bring himself to be serious about it. If the hypertrophy of the legal system is fed by the atrophy of traditional beliefs, then why doesn't Western Europe experience more of these legal symptoms than the United States? And if the ultimate problem is loss of faith, then shouldn't we be preaching the return of religion rather than the reform of legal procedure? These obvious questions are never even broached in *Jurismania*. Rather than stare into the abyss of modernity and experience the abyss staring back at him, Campos retreats into irony. Near the end, he refers to his own book as "this wordy and useless polemic." Still later he confesses the futility of his own undertaking: "To believe the rationalist illusion can be swept aside by reasoned argument is itself a rationalist illusion."

But postmodern irony has its limits, too. *Jurismania* describes the phenomenon very well: "Sophisticated legal academics prefer to affect a jaded, world-weary cynicism." But "let the Supreme Court touch on the scholar's ideological *bête noire*, or the local zoning board threaten to put a McDonald's across the street from

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his house, and all that postmodern ennui in the face of . . . essentially meaningless language games goes right out the window. . . . Professor X, who on most days sounds like a cross between a Chicago Alderman and Michel Foucault, is transmogrified into a hybrid of Perry Mason and Christopher Columbus Langdell [dean of Harvard Law School in the late nineteenth century] and duly unleashes a torrent of sanctimonious formalism in the service of his rediscovered ethical zeal."

Does this tell more about the hypocrisy of the law professors or about the silliness of their affected postmodernism? Campos doesn't say, retreating instead to the pose of the outsider: "If it were my job to parcel out, on the basis of circular justifications and instrumental guesses, a daily portion of the violence of the state, I, too, might become extremely adept at maintaining the intense levels of sophisticated double-think that get the normatively committed law professor through the day." And since Campos proudly conceives himself not to be "normatively committed," he can get through his day with his sense of humor intact.

In fact, however, those who pride themselves on their disdain for the "normative commitments" of justice often betray a secret kinship with those who demand justice "even if the heavens fall." Both stand aloof from the challenges of life in this world. Both postures are, in that sense, academic luxuries. And these days, neither is quite serious.

In his column in the *Denver Post*, published in late January, Campos held that letting the independent counsel make such a to-do about the Lewinsky case was, after all, just another symptom of "jurismania." That's consistent with the argument that we shouldn't let obsessions with perfect justice threaten more immediate, practical concerns. But it is also consistent with world-weary cynicism and postmodern ennui. And it is even consistent with the fact that, as *Jurismania* acknowledges, "the vast majority of law professors are left-liberal Democrats who can be counted on to vote, however grudgingly, for Bill Clinton." For all his iconoclastic posturing, Campos has more in common with that "vast majority" than he likes to admit. But his *Jurismania* remains in many respects a witty and instructive book. ♦

PRIMARY BLACK & WHITE

A Good Political Book Makes a Bad Political Film

By John Podhoretz

From its first moment, *Primary Colors* lets you know that it considers itself a Very Important Film. There are no credits, just a gigantic American flag and a close-up of John Travolta's hand as it grasps another in portentous slow motion. This is almost exactly how the novel by "Anonymous" (okay, by Joe Klein) begins as well: "The handshake is the threshold act, the beginning of politics," Klein writes in the tone of casual assurance that makes the book the best American political novel—and certainly the funniest—since Billy Lee Brammer's *The Gay Place* in 1961.

What is so exhilarating about the book is its impiety. Klein is the first writer to capture the way electoral politics is a grueling, thankless activity all of whose successful practitioners are insane. That's true from the figurehead at the very top—Governor Jack Stanton, the Clinton stand-in played by Travolta—to the operatives and hangers-on who make their living off, and find their life's meaning in, Stanton. They all live at a pace that could drive anyone mad. But if, as Michael Dukakis said, the fish rots from the head down, then it's Stanton/Clinton who's the craziest of them all. He is so overstimulated at the end of every campaign day that he sits for hours in a doughnut shop in the middle of the night gabbing relentlessly to the handicapped kid at the counter.

The movie version manages to be extraordinarily faithful to the book while at the same time capturing very little of its flavor. Take the way director Mike Nichols and screenwriter Elaine May deal with the business of Stanton in the doughnut shop. All the details are the same, but the tone is entirely different. Stanton's presence isn't a telling example of his manic energy but of the way he really cares for the little guy. Nichols and May, that legendary comedy team, lose their sense of humor when it comes to Clinton-style glad-handing.

Nobody will go to see *Primary Colors* for its plot surprises; everybody knows that Clinton won the election. But Nichols and May get all tangled up in the twists and turns of Klein's satire, with its knowing fictionalization of events as disparate as Ross Perot's candidacy, Florida governor Lawton Chiles's psychiatric history, Vincent Foster's suicide, the mysterious deaths at the Mena airstrip, and Clinton's sexual peccadilloes. For Klein, the melodrama is part of the satire's comedy; he is making a point about the circus-like nature of politics in our time.

But the movie becomes all melodrama and no comedy. Nichols and

The editor of the New York Post*'s editorial pages, John Podhoretz is a contributing editor to* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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May fall prey to the same disease that afflicts everyone in Hollywood who decides to make a movie about politics: They decide to show Washington how to do things right by constructing an ideal political figure they use as a stick to beat everybody else with. The lure of the soapbox proves too great for them to resist.

In *Dave* and *The American President*, two political comedies that preceded *Primary Colors* this decade, a conscienceless leader is magically turned into a well-meaning liberal who balances the budget and creates a nationwide jobs program even as he outlaws the ownership of guns. Here, the ideal figure is Freddy Picker, an amalgam of Perot and Chiles who poses the greatest threat to Jack Stanton's candidacy because he is a straight talker and straight shooter. When Stanton's most serious competitor is felled by a heart attack, Picker gets into the race just to hold the spot open for him. As played by Larry Hagman, Picker is some kind of political saint. He doesn't really want the highest office in the land; he's pursuing it only out of a becoming modesty.

The destruction of Picker by the Stanton campaign is the climactic event in both the novel and the movie, but even here Klein maintains his lightness of touch. Klein's Picker may be a good man, but he's also a bit of a fool, and his spiel is as full of hot air as any other politician's—it's just more effective because it's new. Nichols and May, however, come on like Captain Renault in *Casablanca*. They're shocked, shocked to find politics going on in politics, and so the movie becomes heavy with sodden speeches about principles betrayed.

Klein's novel has a wild freedom that is clearly the result of his liberation from his own fantasies about Clinton's greatness. His Jack Stanton is a force of nature—an outsized person who lives according to different rules from the rest of us. Klein doesn't hate Clinton; how do you hate a hurricane? But Nichols and May are hopelessly confused about Stanton, and thus about Clinton as well. They keep trying to bring him down to size, to show the real man behind the façade. It was Klein's insight that even the man behind the façade turns out to be a façade.

As a result, *Primary Colors* remains a deeply unsatisfying movie. All the craziness has been toned down until a campaign seems less like a trip to a lunatic asylum than a day at a college dorm. Where the movie really fails is in its depiction of Jack and Susan Stanton—Bill and Hillary. Watching Travolta play Clinton gives you a headache. He keeps swimming in and out of focus; to the extent he resembles Clinton, he's uncanny, but when he tries to give the character more shading, he's lost. It is particularly distressing to watch him try to throw a Clinton-sized temper tantrum in a car. All Travolta ends up seeming is pouty, not titanically out of control.

As Susan/Hillary, Emma Thompson has been David Brockized, her character stripped of all the cold calculation she possessed in the novel. The movie's Hillary has, instead, been tricked and corrupted by her devilishly charming husband. In fact, Nichols and May have given all the women in the novel plastic surgery to soften their edges. The Susan Thomases character, easily the most vicious caricature in the book, becomes Hillary's nice, dim-bulb buddy. Kathy Bates, who steals the movie as the Betsy Wright character, comes across not as a lovable nutjob, but as the only sane person in an insane world.

Bates delivers the climactic speech about how Clinton has lost his ideals because people like her circle around him like planets around a bright star. She weeps and wails, and it doesn't mean anything—even though what she says is certainly true about the Clintons and the Clintonites. But nothing that happens in the movie version of *Primary Colors* seems to be happening on this earth. It's all happening in a country Nichols and May seem to know nothing about, to people they do not understand. ♦

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Not a Parody

BMCC

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK 199 CHAMBERS STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10007

Office of College Development
212-346-8813
212-346-8815 (fax)

Office of College Relations
212-346-8807
212-346-8815 (fax)

February 24, 1998

TO: The College Community
FROM: Dean Ellen O'Neill

It is very fitting that my letter comes to you on the eve of the penitential season of lent in my church, as I am offering an apology to you for my behavior, behavior for which I am truly sorry.

Please let me explain what happened. On Wednesday, January 21st at a meeting of the Long-Range Planning Committee, Lucille Hawkins and I joined four other members in a small breakout group. As the discussion circle formed, I noticed that Lucille's chair was not aligned with the rest of the chairs. She seemed to be sitting in the center of the circle. In an attempt at humor I said, "Lucille, you are the monkey in the middle of the group!" I was alluding to "monkey in the middle," a schoolyard game we played as children growing up in Elmira, New York. Lucille aligned her chair with the others and we proceeded with our discussion agenda.

It was not until Monday, January 26th that I understood the significance of what I had done. President Perez called me into his office for an early morning meeting and confronted me with my words and how deeply they hurt Lucille. He then asked Lucille to join us. We engaged in a very frank exchange that helped me see that the remark that I made in an attempt at humor—one that I would have made to any one else in the group who was sitting where Lucille was—was so insensitive and hurtful.

Later that morning I wrote Lucille a letter of apology and sent copies to each member of our discussion group. In the month since the incident occurred, Lucille and I have had a number of in-depth discussions about the incident, the pain she has suffered because of me, my own pain at being labeled a racist, and how we can rebuild our relationship.

Lucille and I had a relationship of mutual trust and respect before the incident, and we have had a positive work relationship since the incident. I am pleased she continues to be a part of our staff.

I made a mistake—a big one. But I have learned from it. I know I must be more sensitive to the ethnicity and racial differences represented here and I will be. I am proud to be a part of such a diverse and culturally rich community.

And so to Lucille, and to anyone else who was offended or hurt by my comment, let me say again—I am very sorry for the pain I caused and I hope you can forgive me.

I believe that some good can come from all of this, in the form of a heightened awareness of the sensitivity we all should have to the feelings of others.

I am told, lent comes from the old English word for "springtime"—a time of new birth, new life and growth. I hope all of us at BMCC can welcome this spring with renewed mutual understanding and respect.

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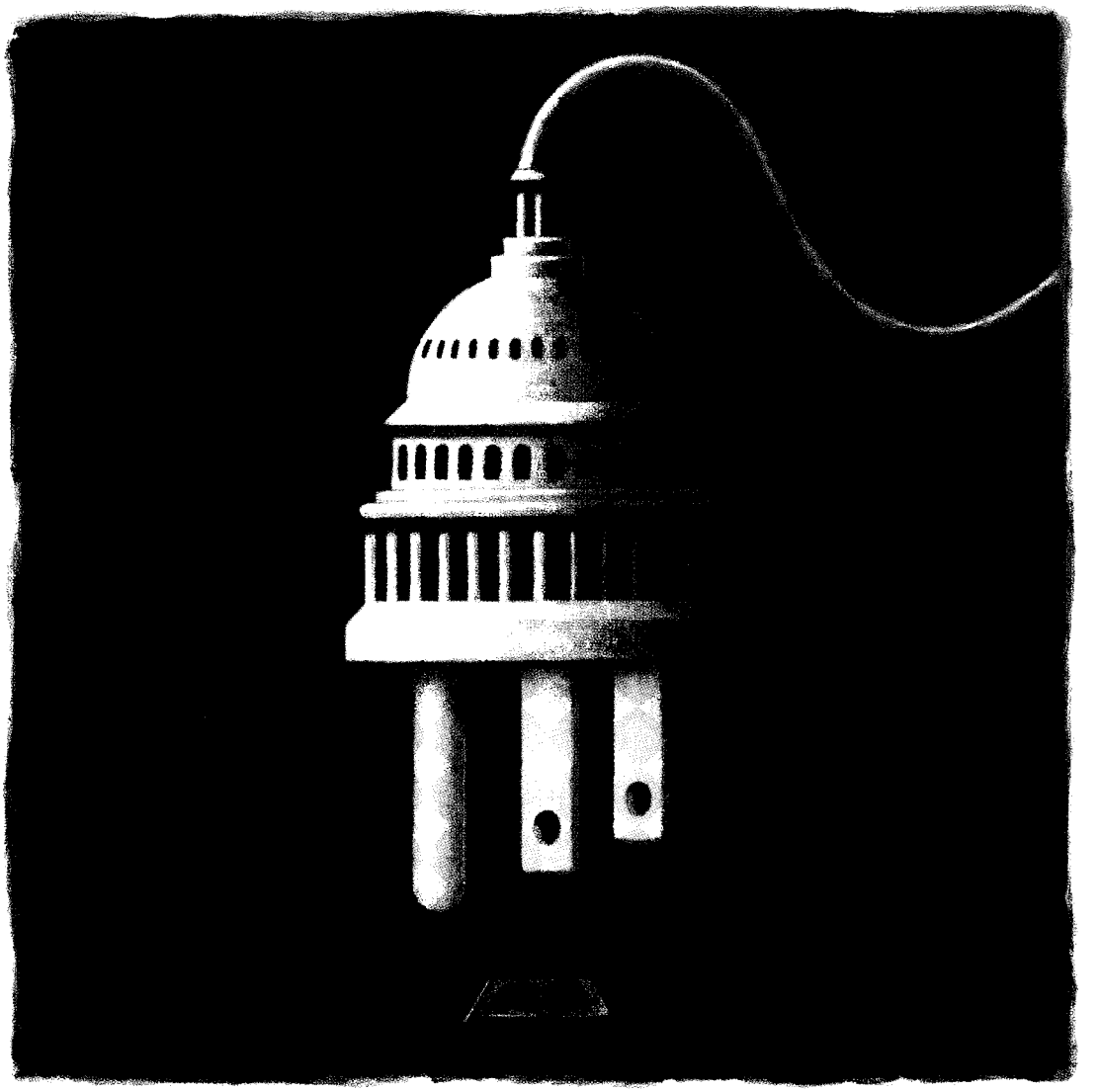

One Size Fits All?

Some members of Congress persist in advocating a "one-size-fits-all" federal mandate when it comes to electricity rate restructuring.

This proposal to nationalize America's electricity rates is bad news for those vanguard states—like Illinois, Oklahoma, California and Virginia—that have already embraced consumer choice reforms. Believe it or not, certain members of Congress are demanding that these states start over...do it again...and do it the way 'we' tell you!

And this proposal is very troubling news for low cost states—like Kentucky, Idaho, Washington, Georgia and others —where a nationalized marketplace can only mean higher electricity bills!

We're Electric USA and we speak for many of the six million Americans who are shareholders in America's investor owned utilities. We are proud to count labor unions and 137 rural electric coops among our ranks. We say "no" to any one-size-fits-all scheme to nationalize America's electricity rates!

EUSA
Electric Utility Shareholders Alliance
P.O. Box 104595
Jefferson City, MO 65110-4595
eusa@ix.netcom.com

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